

## Prohempe



Rete thankes lalwe and honour/ought to be gy-  
 uen vnto the clerkes/ poetes/ and? historiographes  
 that haue wretton many noble booke of wysedom  
 of the lyues/ passiōs / & myracles of holy sayntes  
 of hystories/ of noble and? famous Actes / and?  
 faittes/ And of the cronycles sith the begynnyng  
 of the creation of the world? vnto thys present tyme/ By whiche  
 we ten dayly enformed? and haue knowleche of many thynges/  
 of whom we shold? not haue knowen / yf they had? not left to vs  
 theyr monumentis wretton/ Among whom and? mespecial to fore  
 alle other we ought to gyue a synguler laude vnto that noble &  
 grete philosopher Gefferey chaucer the whiche for his ornat wry-  
 tyng in our tongue maye wel haue the name of a laureate poe-  
 te / For to fore that he by hys labour enbelysshyd? ornatyd? and  
 made faire our englysshe/ in thys Royame was had? rude speche &  
 incongrue/ as yet it appereth by olde bookes/ whiche at thys day  
 ought not to haue place ne be comparyd? emōge ne to hys beaute-  
 uous volumes/ and aournate wrytynges/ of whom he made ma-  
 ny booke and? treatyses of many a noble historye as wel in me-  
 tre as in ryme and? prose/ and? them so craftly made/ that he cō-  
 prehendyd? hys maters in short / quyk and? hys sentences / ef-  
 felbyng? prolyphte/ castyng alway the chaf of superfluyte / and?  
 shewyng? the pyked? graph of sentence/ Vtteryd? by crafty and? su-  
 gred? eloquence/ of whom emonge all other of hys booke/ I pur-  
 pose to emprynte by the grace of god? the booke of the tales of can-  
 temberge/ in whiche I fynde many a noble historye/ of euery astat-  
 te and? degre/ fyrst rekyng? the condiciōs/ and? tharawe of eche  
 of them as properly as possyble is to be sayd? / And? after theyr  
 tales whiche ten of noblesse/ wysedom / gentyllesse / Myrthe/ and?  
 also of veray holynesse and? vertue / wher in he fynysshyth thys  
 sayd? booke / whiche booke I haue dyligently ouerlen and? duly  
 examyned to thende that it be made accordyng vnto his olde ma-  
 kyng? / For I fynde many of the sayd? booke / whiche wry-  
 ters haue abrydgyd? it and? many thynges left out / And? in  
 some place haue sette certayn verses/ that he neuer made ne sette  
 in hys booke/ of whiche booke so inordinate was one brought to  
 me by yere passyd? / whiche I supposed? had? ten veray true & cor-  
 recte / And? accordyng to the same I dyde do emprynte a certayn

## Prohemye

ombre of them / whiche anon were sold to many and dyuerse  
entyl men / of whome one gentylman cam to me / and said that  
his booke was not accordyng in many places vnto the booke that  
Jefferey chauncer had made / To whom I answered that I had ma-  
de it accordyng to my coppye / and by me was nothing added ne  
ynuyschyd / Thanne he sayd he knewe a booke whiche hys fader  
had and moche bound / that was very trewe / and accordyng vnto  
his olde first booke by hym made / and sayd more yf I wold  
imprynt it agayn he wold gette me the same booke for a coppye /  
wher he it he wylle wel / that hys fader wold not gladly departe  
fro it / To whom I said / in case that he coude gette me suche a booke  
trewe and correcte / yet I wold ones endeuoure me to imprynt it  
agayn / for to satisfie thauour / where as to fore by ygnorance  
I erred in hurtynge and dyffamynge his booke in dyuerse places  
in settynge in some thynges that he neuer sayd ne made / and he  
wyng out many thynges that he made whiche ben requysite to be  
sette in it / And thus we fell at accord / And he ful gentylly  
gate of hys fader the said booke / and deliuerd it to me / by which  
I haue corrected my booke / as here after alle alonge by the praye of  
almighty god / shal folowe / whom I humbly beseeche to graue me  
grace and ayde to achyue / and accomplishe / to hys laude ho-  
nour and glorie / and that alle ye that shal in this booke rede or  
heere / wylle of your charyte amonge your dedes of mercy / remem-  
bre the folle of the sayd Jefferey chauncer first autour / and ma-  
ker of this booke / And also that alle we that shal see and rede  
therin / may so take and vnderstode the good and vertuous ta-  
les / that it may so prouffite / vnto the helthe of our soules / that  
after this short and transitorye lyf we may come to euerlastyng  
lyf in heuen / Amen

By Wylliam Caxton

## Prologue

**W**han that Apyll wyth hys shouris sote  
The droughte of marche hath perceyd the rote  
And luthyd every heyne in such lycour  
Of whiche vertue engendryd is the flour

Whanne Zepherus eke wyth hys sote breth  
Enspyrid hath in every holt and leth  
The tendre croppis / and the yonge sonne  
Hath in the ram half hys cours y ronne  
And smale fowles make melodye  
That slepyng al nyght wyth opyn eye  
So prylyth hem nature in her corages  
Thin longyn folk to gon on pylgrymages  
And palmers to seke straunge strandis  
To serue hallowys couthe in sondry bondis  
And specyally fro every shyris ende  
Of engelond to Cauntirbury thy benede  
The holy blyssful martir for to seke  
That hem hath holpyng when they were seke

**B**yspil in that seson on a day  
In Suthwerk atte taburd as I lay  
Redy to wenden on my pylgrymage  
To Cauntirbury wyth deuout corage  
That nyght was come in to that hostelrye  
Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye  
Of sondry folk by auenture y falle  
In feleshyp and pylgrymys were they alle  
That towarde Cauntirbury wolde ryde  
The chambrys and the stablys were byde  
And wel were we esyd atte keste  
And shortly whan the sonne was at reste  
So had I spokyn wyth hem euerychon  
That I was of her feleshyp anon  
And made forwarde erly for to ryse  
To take our wey there as I you deuyse  
But natheles whyles I haue tyme and space  
Or that I ferthyr in thys tale pace  
Me thynketh it accordaunt to reson  
To telle you al the condiaon

## Prologue

Of cete of hym so as it semed me  
And of whiche they were and of what degre  
And in what aay eke they weren ynn  
And at a knyght thenne I wyl begyne



**A** knyght ther was a worthy man  
That fro the tyme that he first began  
To ryden out / he loved chivalrye  
Trouth & honour freedom and curtesye  
In worthy he was in his lordis lere  
And thereto hadde he ryden noman ferre  
And as wel in crystendom as in sethenesse  
And euer hadde honour for his worthynesse  
At alsaundre he was whan it was donne  
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the word begonne  
Abouen alle nations in prynces  
In letwyl hadde he wysed and in Ruse

## Prologue

No crysten man so often tymes as he  
Ingarnade at the sege eke hadde he he  
At Algezir/and ryden in Belmarpe  
At sepeys was he and eke at Satalye  
Whan they were wonne and in the grette see  
At many at nobyl arme hadde he he  
At mortal batayllis had he he fyftene  
And foughte for our feyth at Trampysse  
In lyses threes and ay sleyn hys foo  
Thys ylle worthy knyght hadde he also  
Som tyme wyth the lord of Palatye  
Agayn another litten man in Turkye  
And euermore he hadde a souerayn pryse  
And though he was worthy he was wyse  
And of hys port as meke as a mayde  
He neuer yet no bylayne he sayde  
In al hys lyf vnto no maner wyght  
He was a very gentyl parfeyght knyght  
For to telle you of hys aray  
Hys hors were good but he was not gay  
Of fustian he wered a gypion  
Al he smered wyth hys salergeon  
For he was late come fro hys vyage  
And sent for to do hys pylgremage

## Prologue



**W**ith hym ther was hys sone a yonge squyer  
A lover and a lusty bacheler  
With lockys crulle as they were leydy in presse  
Of twenty yer of age he was y gesse  
Of hys stature he was of euene lengthe  
And wonderly delycous and of greet strengthe  
And he had he som tyme in chyuauchye  
In Flaundys in Artoys and in Pycardye  
And born hym wel as of a lytyl space  
In hope to stonden in hys ladyes grace  
Embrowded was he as it were a mede  
All ful of fressh flourys whyte and rede  
Syngynge he was or floytynge al the day  
He was as fressh as is the moneth of may  
Short was hys goibne with fleuyes longe & wyde  
Wel couthe he sitte on hors & therw faye ryde  
He couthe songys make and wel endyte  
Gouste and daunte portraie and eke wyte

## Prologue

So hot he louedy that by nyghter take  
 He slepte nomore than a nyghtyngale  
 Curteys he was colly and scrupulys  
 He carf befor hys fader at the tabyl



**A** Peman hadde he and seruantes nomo  
 At that tyme for he lyst to rode so  
 And he was clady in cote & hood of grene  
 A sheef of pecol awolues bryght and fyne  
 Under hys kelt he bare ful thryftylly  
 Wel coude he dresse hys tabyl pomanly  
 Hys awolues drouped not wyth fetherys bolbe  
 And in hys hond he bare a myghty bolbe  
 A not he had with a brown bylge  
 Of wodemaunes craft coude he al the bylge  
 Wy on hys arme he bare a gay bracer  
 And by hys syde a swerd and a boeler  
 And on that other syde a gay daggare  
 Harnysed wel and sharpe as point of spere

## Prologue

A Cristofir on hys brest of siluer shene  
 An horn he bar the baldryk was of grene  
 A forster was he sothly as I gesse



Her was also a nonne a priorelle  
 That of hys symplyng was sympyl & koy  
 Here gretteste oth was he saynt koy  
 And she was clepyd dame Eglentyng

Ful wel she songe the scrurye dypne  
 Entwued in hys dops ful samely  
 And frensh she spak ful fetuylly  
 After the scole of stratforde at the bolbe  
 For frensh of paris was to hys vnknothe  
 At mete wel taught was she wyth al  
 She lete no morsel fro hys lyppe fal  
 He wette hys fynge in hys sauce depe  
 Wel coude she cary a morsel of mete

## Prologue

That no drop fyl vpon hyr brest  
In curtesye was set ful myghtyl hyr lest  
Her ouerlpye lyped; she so clene  
That in her cup ther was no fethynge sene  
Of grete/whan she hadde dronke her draugh  
ful semely after hyr mete she vaught  
And; sekerly she was of grete dysport  
Of plesaunce and; ampyable of port  
And; peyned; her to countrefete chere  
Of courtes and; to be stately of manere  
And; to be holde dygne of reuerence  
But for to speke of hyr conscience  
She was so charytable and; so pyetous  
She wolde; lyeve yf that she salve a mous  
kylght in trape yf it were ded; or bledde  
Of smale hounys hadde she that she fedde  
Wyth rose flessh or mylke or wastel bred;  
But sore lyeve she yf ony of them were ded;  
Or yf men smoot hem wyth yerd; smert  
And; al was conscience and; tendyr hert  
ful semely hyr bymptyl pynched; was  
Her nose tretise her eyen greyn as glas  
Her mouth smal and; ther to softe and; reed;  
But sykely she had; a fayr forked;  
It was almost a span brode; I trolbe  
For hardly she was not vnder grolbe  
ful fetter was her cloke as; I was waat  
Of smal coral aboute her harm she laar  
A pyre of bedis; gauded; al wyth grene  
And; there on heng; a broche ful shene  
On whych; first was wyte a crowned; A  
And; after that Amor vnat omnia  
A nother Nonne wyth her hath she  
That was her chapelayn and; prestis thre

## Prologue



**A** Monk ther was faye for the maystere  
An out ryder that loued wel venore  
A manly man to be an abbote able  
Ful many a deynthe hors hadde he in stable  
And when he wode men myghte his byrdyl here  
Synge synge and whysel synge in the wynd clere  
And eke as solde as doth the chapel belle  
There as this lord was keeper of the celle  
The reble of saynt Maure and of saynt Benet  
We cause he held it somwhat old and seynt  
I his plike monke lete olde thynges pace  
And held after the newe world the space  
He pas not of the text a pulled synne  
That seyth that hunters be not holy men  
Ne that a monk whanne he is reckless  
Is lyk to a fiske when it is waterless

## Prologue

This is to saye a monke out of a choyse  
But that tyme held he not worth an oyste  
And I say that hys oppynion was good  
What shold he studie and make hym wood  
Upon a book alwey in choyse to poltre  
Or swynke wyth hys hondis and labour  
As Austyn byddeth holw shold the world be serued  
Let Austyn haue hys swynk to hym reserued  
Therefore he was a pryousour a ryght  
Grehoundis he had as swyft as foul in flyght  
Of prykyng and of huntynge for the hare  
Was al hys luste for no coste wolde he spare  
I salbe hys sleupe purfyled at the hond  
Wyth grece and that the fynest of a bond  
And to fasten hys hood Under the chynne  
He hadde of gold wrought a curyous pynne  
A bus knot in the gretter ende ther was  
Hys heed was lakked wyth schoon as glas  
And eke hys face as he had ben anoynt  
He was a lord fatte and in good poynt  
Hys eyen steep and rollynge in hys heed  
That stempd as a furnys of a leed  
Hys footis soluyd hys hors in grette astate  
Nolw certenly he was a fayr prelate  
He was not pale as a fourpyned goose  
A fat swan lued he best of ony roost  
Hys palfrey was as brown as a kery

## Prologue



**T**here ther was albanon and a mery  
A lymptour and a ful solemne man  
In alle the ordrys four is non that can  
So moche of dalaunce and fair langage  
He hadde made ful many a fair mariage  
Of yong wymmen at hys owen coste  
Until hys ordre he was a nobil post  
Ful welbeloued and ful famplier was he  
Wyth frankelynes ouer al in hys contre  
And eke wyth worthy yemen of the towne  
For he had polver of confession  
As sayd hym self more than a curat  
And of hys ordre he was licenciat  
Ful swetly herd he confession  
And plesaunt was hys absolucion  
And an esy man to gyue penaunce  
There he wiste to haue good pitaunce  
For vnto a poure ordre forto gyue

## Prologue

As signe that a man is wel ȝ shryue  
For yf he yaf / he durste make a daunt  
He wyse that a man was repentaunt  
Many a man so hardy is of herte  
He may not wepe thought he fore smerte  
Therefore in stede of wepyng and prayers  
Men mooste geue siluer to the poure priors  
Hys wyf was ȝ farsed ful of knyghts  
And wyth pynnyngs to geue fayre wyngys  
And certayn he hadde a mery note  
Wherby coude he synge and pleye of the rote  
Of peddyingis he haar vtterly the pryys  
Hys necke was whyt as the flour delys  
Wherto stronge he was as a champion  
And knelbe the tawneys wel in euery town  
And euery osteler and tapstere  
Better than a lazer or a leagesere  
For to bryn such a werkyng man as he  
Recordyth not as by hys faculte  
To haue of such le lazers & caueyntaunt  
It is not honest it may not auaynt  
For to dele wyth such wraulle  
But wyth rice and sellers of byzylle  
And ouer al there as rich he sholdy cryse  
Curteis he was and lowly of semple  
There was no man noblere so vertuous  
He was the beste leger in hys hous  
And yaf a certayn ferme for the graunt  
Noon of hys brethern cam in hys haunt  
For though a wydolbe indy not a schoo  
So plesaunt was hys in vniuersio  
Yet woldy he haue a fertyng or se went  
Hys purchace was better than hys rent  
And kurye he couthe as it were a whelpe  
In luedayes there coude he myghyl helpe  
For there he nas lyke a cloysterer  
Wyth a threedure cope as a poure frere  
But he was lyke a mayster or a pope

## Prologue

Of dubbel worstede was hys semy cope  
 That wounde was as a helle out of presse  
 Somwhat he lispde for hys wantownesse  
 To make hys englyssh slyte vpon hys tonge  
 And in hys harpyng whan he hadde 3 sunge  
 Hys eyen tlypnyd in hys hed a ryght  
 As doon the stertis in the frosty nyght  
 Thys worthy fere was callyd hul lerd



**H** Marchaunt ther was wyth a forkyd lerd  
 In motley on hygh on hys hors he sat  
 Up on his hed a flaundres leuer hat  
 Hys bootis claspde feyt and fevously  
 Hys retons he spak ful solemneley  
 Sixtyng all day the encesse of hys bynyng  
 He wolde the see were kept for ony thyng  
 Betwix myddelburgh and orellesse  
 Welle coude he in hys eschaunges selle

## Prologue

This worthy man his lyfte ful wel bestide  
Eke myght no myght that he was in detre  
So estatly he was of gouernaunce  
Wyth his bargayns and wyth gys chuesaunce  
Forsothe he was a worthy man wyth alle  
But soch to say I not holb men hym calle



**A** Clerk ther was of Oxenford also  
That into logik hadde longe I go  
As lene was his hors as a rake  
And he was not ryght fat I undertake  
But helyd holb and therto sobyrlly  
Ful threedure was his ouerst courtly  
For he hadde note hym yet no knespece  
He was not worldly to haue an offyce  
For hym was leue to haue at his beddis heed  
Twenty bokys I clady in whyt and reed  
Of Aristotle and of his phylsophye

## Prologue

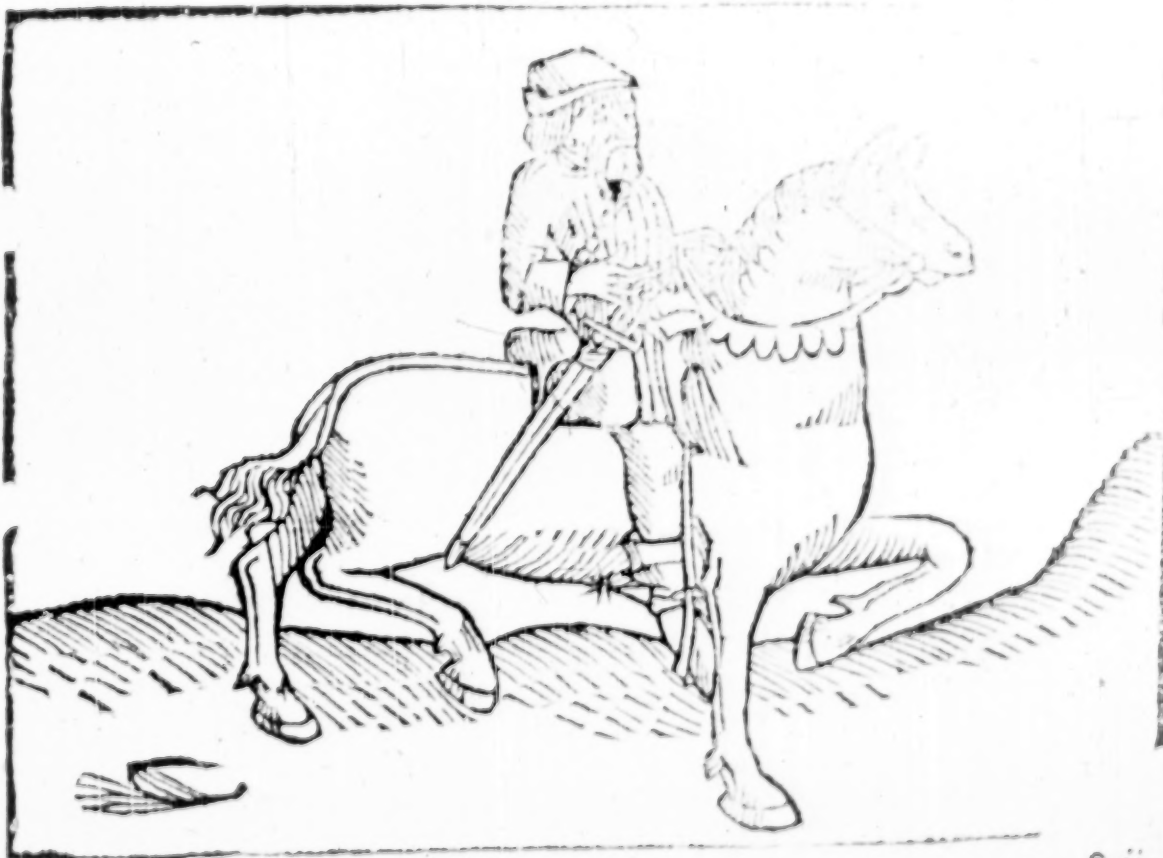
Than Robys rich or rydyl or salbtrye  
But al he that he was a physyphye  
Yet hadde he but lytyl gold in cofre  
But al that he myghte of hys frendys lent  
On bokys and on lernynge he it spent  
And besely gan for the soules praye  
Of hem that pas hym lyerlyth to scolape  
Of study took he most cure and hede  
Not a worde spak he more than nede  
And that was sayd in fourme and reuerence  
Short and quyk and ful of hygh sentence  
Solmyng moral vertu was hys speche  
And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche



**A** Sergeante of salve waar and byse  
Was there that ofte hadde he at the peryse  
That was also ful rich of excellence  
Discrete he was and of grete reuerence

## Prologue

He semyd such hys wordys were so wyse  
Iustyce he was ful ofte in assyse  
By patent andy he playn commissioun  
For hys science andy hys hygh renoun  
Of fees andy Robys hadde he many on  
So gret a purchasour was there nollther non  
Al was see symple to hym in effecte  
Hys purchace myghte not be to hym suspecte  
Nollther so lesy aman as he ther nas  
Andy yet he semyd besyer than he was  
In termes hadde he caas andy domes alle  
That fro the tyme of kyng William were falle  
Eter he coude endyte andy make a thyng  
Eter coude no wyght pynche at hys wrytynge  
Andy every statute coude he pleye by rote  
He woud but homely in a medle cote  
I gyrt wyth a seynt of silk wyth hurris smale  
Of hys aray telle I no lenger tale



## Prologue

**I**frankeleyn was in hys compaignye  
Whyte was hys herde as is the deysie  
And of hys complexion was sanguyn  
Wel boued he by the morow a cup loun  
To lyue in delyte was euer hys wone  
For he was eppurpes olben sone  
That held oppynon that pleyn delyte  
Was veray felicitye parfyte  
An housholer and that a grette was he  
Saynt Julian he was in hys contre  
Hys brede hys ale was allewey after one  
A better byned man was nobler none  
Wythoute luke mete was he neuer in his hous  
Hys fisch hys flesch and that so plentuous  
It snelved in hys holles of mete and drynke  
Of alle deyntes that men couthe thynke  
Aftyr the sondry seson of the yere  
So chaunged he hys mete and hys soper  
Ful many a fat partych hadde he in melbe  
And many a brewe and lucc in stelbe  
Wo was hys cook but hys salter were  
Poynant and sharp and redy al hys gere  
Hys tabyl dormaunt in hys halle all day  
Was redy couered al the longe day  
At sessions ther was he lord and sir  
Ful ofte tyme he was knyght of the shyre  
A anlace and a gypser al of silk  
Wyngre at hys gyrdyl as whyte as morow mylk  
A stertue hadde he ben and a coronour  
Was nobler such a worthy Baucour

## Prologue



**A** Subpredaffix ther was and; a carpenter  
 A webbe a dyer aud; a tapper  
 And; they were clothed; alle in o lyuers  
 Of a solempne and; grete fraternyte  
 Ful fresch and; nelbe sex geer pyked; was  
 Here knyghts chappd; were not wyth bras  
 But; al wyth siluer wrought ful clene and; wel  
 Here gyrdels and; hyr polychys euerydel  
 Wel semed; eche of hem a faye burgeys  
 To sitten in the yeld; halle at the deys  
 Euerych for the wysdom that he can  
 Was happely forto be an aldyrman  
 For catyll hadde they ynolb and; rent  
 And; here wyys wold; it wel assent  
 And; ekkis certayn they were to blame  
 Wyt is ful faye to be callid; madame  
 And; go to the bygyffis al before

## Prologue

And haue a mantel riallly I bore



**H** Cook they hadde wyth hem for the nonys  
To kyllle the chylyens & the mary bonys  
And polver marchaunt tart and galyngale  
Wel knew he a draughte of london ale  
He coude roste seche broyle and frye  
Make morttelbys and wel like a pye  
But greet harm was it as it thoughte me  
For on hys shynne a mormal hody he  
And blank manger made he wyth the best

## Prologue



**A** Sypman was there that woned for le bestee  
 For ought I wot he was of derthemouth  
 He wode by a rolunce as he couthe  
 In a golde foldynge to the kyng  
 A dagger on a lace hangynge had he  
 About his necke vnder his arm adoun  
 The hote somer hadde made his selbe al browne  
 And certaynly he was a good felawe  
 Ful many a draughte wyth he hadde dralwe  
 Fro burdeus ward whyle the charyman sleep  
 Of nyte conspencye toke he no keep  
 Yf that he faught and had the hygher hond  
 By water he sent hem hom to euery lond  
 But of his craft to rekyn wel his tyde  
 His sermys and his daungers hym besyde  
 His herberaigh his mone and his lodemanage  
 Ther was none such from hulle to Cartage

## Prologue

Hardy he was and bar to undertake  
With many a tempest his body hath he shaken  
He knew all the haues that there were  
From godelond in to the Capfenestre  
And every cryke in brytayne and in spayne  
His barge was called the Maudeleyne



**W**ith us ther was a doctour in physik  
In the world was ther none hym lyk  
To speke of physik and surgerie  
For he was groundyd in Astronome  
He kept his pacient a greet deel  
In houses by magyk naturel  
Wel couthe he of fortune the assendent  
Of his ymages for his pacient  
He knewe the cause of every maladye  
Were it of cold or of moyste or drye  
And were engendred of what humour  
He was a very parfayt practour

## Prologue

The cause y knowe and of hys harm the roote  
Anon he gaf to the sick man hys boote  
For redy allway he hys apothecaries  
To sende hym drugges & hys seetelbarres  
For eche of them made other for to bypnyne  
Wer frendshyp was not nelbe to begynne  
Ful wel knewe he the olde Esculapius  
And dyscorides and eke Rufus  
Olde yppocras/haly and eke Galiene  
Serapion Rasis and eke Auicene  
Auerroys damascene and constantyn  
Bernard Gatisden and Gylkertyn  
Of hys dyete mesurable was he  
For it was of no superfluyte  
But of grete nouryshyp and dygestyble  
Hys stody was but lytyl on the byble  
In sangweyn and in perce I cladyd wyth all  
Fyned wyth taffata and wyth sandall  
And lytyl he was of hys dyspence  
He kepte that he, whan in the pestelence  
For gold in physik is a cordyal  
Therfor he loued gold in espectral

## Prologue



**A** Good wyf ther was of beside bathe  
 And she was sondeel deef & that was scathe  
 Of cloth makinge And she sucke an haunt  
 She passed them of pyre and of gaunt  
 In al the parisshe wyf was ther non  
 That to the offrynge before hyr sholde goon  
 And yf ther dyd certayn wroth R as she  
 Thin was she oute of al charyte  
 Her kercheys ful fyn were of grounde  
 I durste swere they weyede thre pounde  
 That on a sonday were on hyr lode  
 Hyr hosyn were of fyne scarlet reede  
 Ful strepte & teped and shooes ful moyse and nelve  
 Bold was her face fayr and rede of selve  
 She was a worthy woman al hyr lyue  
 Husbandys at the chyrche dore hadde she fyue  
 Wythoute other companie in yowthe  
 But her of nedys not to speke as nowthe

## Prologue

At aces had she been and at Iherusalem  
She had passyd thourgh many a strange rene  
At Rome she had be and at Coloyne  
At saynt James in Galis and at Coloyne  
She coude moche of wandryng in the weye  
Gep tothydd was she sothly to seye  
Op on an ambuler ful esely she sat  
I hymnydd wel & on hyr hed an hat  
As brood at it were a bokeler or a targe  
A foot mantyl aboute her hyppis large  
And on hyr helys a pyre of sporis sharpe  
In felesshyp coude she talke and carpe  
Of remedies of loue she coude per chaunce  
For of that arte she coude the olde daunce.



**A** Good man ther was of religion  
And was a poure parson of a town  
But rich he was of holy thought & werk  
He was also a lerned man and a clerk

## Prologue

This crystis gospelles treibly woldy preche  
Hys parishons deuoutly wold he teche  
Benygne he was and wonder dyligent  
And in aduersite ful pacient  
And such he was prouedy ofte sithen  
Ful both were he to curse for hys tithys  
But Fathyr wold he geue out of doute  
Vnto hys poure parishons aboute  
Of hys offryng and eke of hys substaunce  
He coude in lityl thyng haue suffysaunce  
Wyde was his paryshe & housis fer a sondir  
But he let not for rayn ne for thundyr  
In siknesse nex in myschep to bysite  
The ferrest in hys parish more and lute  
Wy on hys feet and in hys hond a staf  
Thys nobyl ensample vnto hys shep he gaf  
That first he broughte & afterwarde taught  
Out of the gospel the wordys he caught  
And thys figure he chyd therto  
That yf goldy ruste what shold I ren do  
For a preest to be foul in whom we truste  
No wonder is a selbyd man to ruste  
And shame it is yf a preest tulle kepe  
A slotty shepsterd and a clene shepe  
Wel oughte a preest ensample to geue  
We hys clenness holb hys shep shold lye  
We sette not hys benefyte to hyr  
And let hys shep acombre in the myre  
And renne to London to saynt Poules  
And seke hym a chaunteye for soules  
O hyr wyth a bretherhode to be wythholde  
But duelle at home and kepe hys folde  
So that the wolf ne made it not myschape  
He was a shepsterd and not a merchaunte  
And though he holy were and vertuous  
He was nat to synfulmen to despyoue  
Ne of hys techyng dangerous ne dygne  
But in hys speche dyscrete and benygne

## Prologue

To draue folk to heuen byth fayrnesse  
 Be good ensampyl thys was hys besynesse  
 But it were ony persone obstynat  
 Whether he were of hygh or lowe estat  
 hym wold he synke sharply for the nonys  
 A better preest I trow nold here non is  
 He wolded astyr no pompe ne reuerence  
 He made to hym a spede conscience  
 But crystys lore and hys apostelis tiberue  
 He taughte but first he folowed hym selue



**W**ith hym ther was a wolfulman hys brother  
 That hadde led of dunge many a fother  
 A trelve slypner and a good was he  
 Feynge in wees and purfit charyte  
 God knewe he lest byth al hys herte  
 At alle tymes though he gamede or smerte  
 And than hys neyghebour ryght as hym selue

## Prologue

That crystis gospelis treibly woldy preche  
Hys parissions deuoutly wold he teche  
Wenpne he was and wonder dyligent  
And in aduersite ful pacient  
And suche he was proued of the fithes  
Ful both were he to curse for hys tithys  
But Pather wold he geue out of doute  
Vnto hys poure parissions aboute  
Of hys offryngs and eke of hys substaunce  
He coude in lityl thyngs haue sustynaunce  
Wyde was his parysse & housis fer a sondir  
But he let not for rayn ne for thundyr  
In siknesse ner in myschyncer to bysite  
The ferrest in hys pariss more and lute  
Vp on hys feet and in hys hond a staf  
Thys nobyl ensample vnto hys shep he gaf  
That first he broughte & afterward taught  
Out of the gospel the wordys he caught  
And thys figure he eked therto  
That yf goldy ruste what sholdy Iren do  
For a preest to be foul in whom we truste  
No wonder is a selbyd man to ruste  
And same it is yf a preest take kepe  
A slotty shepsterde and a clene shepe  
Wel oughte a preest ensample to geue  
We hys clenness holw hys shep sholdy true  
We sette not hys benefyte to hyr  
And lette hys shep acombrie in the myre  
And renne to London to saynt Poules  
And seke hym a chauntre for soules  
O hyr wyth a bretherhede to be wythholde  
But duelle at home and kepe hys folde  
So that the wolf ne made it not myschance  
He was a shepsterde and not a merchaunte  
And though he holy were and vertuous  
He was nat to synfulmen to despytous  
Ne of hys techyng dangerous ne dygne  
But in hys speche dyscrete and benygne

## Prologue

To draue folk to heuen byth faynesse  
Be good ensampyl thys was hys besinesse  
But it were ony persone obstynat  
Whether he were of hygh or lowe estat  
Hym bold he synnys sharply for the nonys  
A better preest I trow noldhere non is  
He waped aftyr no pompe ne ruerence  
He made to hym a spred conspence  
But crystys lore and hys apostelis trelue  
He taughte but first he folowed hym selue



**W**ith hym ther was a peolman hys brother  
That hadde led of dunge many a fother  
A trelve synner and a good was he  
Feynge in pees and purfit charyte  
God knew he lest byth al hys herte  
At alle tymes though he gamed or smerte  
And than hys neyghebour ryght as hym selue

## Prologue

He wolde thresshe and thereto dygge and delue  
For crystis sake for every peure byght  
Wythoute hire yf it lay in his myght  
His tythes payde he to the fayre and wel  
Of his propre sbyrn and his catel  
In a tabard he roode by on a mere  
There was also a true and eek a Myllere  
A sompoure and a pardoner also  
A Manapill and my self ther was no mo



**T**he myllere was a stout carle for the nonys  
Ful byge he was of brawn and bones  
That proued wel for oueral there he cam  
At brastelunge alwey he wolde haue the ram  
He was short shuldred brood a thykke quarre  
Ther was no dore that he nolde keue of the barre  
Or breke it at rennyng wyth his fedre

## Prologue

Hys herd as ony solbe or fox was mede  
And therto broode as it were a spade  
Up on the cop right of hys nose he hede  
A vert and ther on stood a tuft of hris  
Rede as the brustelis of a solbes cris  
Hys nostrillis blak were and wyde  
A sberd and a bokeler wat he by hys syde  
Hys mouth as greet was as a furnes  
He was a Jangler and a goliardys  
And that was most of synne and harlotryes  
Wel coude he stele corn and tolle thryes  
And that he hadde a thombe of gold parde  
A whyt cote and a blew hood veryd he  
A luggge pype coude he scholbe and solue  
And therlbyth he brougte vs out of tolue



**H**entyl Mancypyl was ther of the temple  
Of whych a catour myghte take exemple  
For to be wys in bypunge of vytayl

## Prologue

For whether he payde or took by tynel  
Algate he waytyde so on hys achate  
That he was ay before andy in goody state  
Nold is not that of gody a fayr grace  
That such a leldy mannyngs lyfte shal part  
The wysedom of an hie of lernedy men  
Of maystres hadde he moo than thryes ten  
That were of salbe expert andy curious  
Of whyche there were a dosen in that hous  
Worthy to be stuardys of rente andy londe  
Of ony lordy that is in Englonde  
To make hym lyue he hys olben goode  
In honour detles but he were wooddy  
Othyr lyue scarsely as hym lise desire  
Andy alle for to helpe al the shyre  
In ony cause that myghthe falle or hyppre  
Andy yet thys mannyng set al her cappe



## Prologue

**A** Reue ther was a stēdir colerik man  
His herd is shauē as nygh as he can  
His heris were he his eris wūd y shōre  
His top was dockid; lik a prest before  
Ful longe were hys leggis and; ful lene  
Eyk a staf ther nys no calf y sene  
Wel coude he kepe a garner and; a bynne  
Etk was non audithur wude of hym bynne  
Wel wist he by the droughte and; by the rayn  
Etk yeldynge of hys seed; and; of hys greyn  
Hys lordis sleep hys neet and; hys deyn  
Hys slyne his hors his stoor & his pultrye  
Was holly in thys weys gouernynge  
And; by hys couenaunt pas the rekenynge  
Syth hys lord; was tūenty yere of age  
Etk coude noman bynne hym in arerage  
Etk nas byllly ne noon other byne  
Etk he ne knelbe his slepyghte or hys couyne  
Etk were of hym a drady as of the deth  
Hys wonynge was ful fayr by on a lath  
Wyth grene treys shadowed; was hys place  
He coude better than his lord; purchace  
Ful rich; he was astored; pryncely  
Hys lord; wel he coude please subtyllly  
To geue & lene to hym of hys olde good;  
And; haue thank & yet a cote and; an hood;  
In yongthe he hadde lerned; a good; mystere  
He was a wel good; wyght a Carpenter  
Etk reue sat by on a wel good; stot  
Etk was al yomel gray and; byghte scot  
A longe surcoat of Perre by on hym he hadde  
And; by hys side he bar a rusty blade  
Of norfolk was thys reue of whiche I telle  
Beside a town men calle Baldyswelle  
Tuckyd; he was as is a fere aboute  
And; euer he wode the hynderest of the wote

## Prologue



**H**ompnour wyth he was in that place  
 That hadde a fyre reed; cherybys face  
 For sauffleme he was wyth eyen narow  
 Hoot he was and; likerous as a sparow  
 Wyth blake browes skallid; and; pilled; berd;  
 Of hys bysage chyldren were a ferd;  
 Ther nas quylsiluer starge ne byrmstone  
 Worace ceruse ne oyle of tartre none  
 Ne oynement that wolde; clense and; hye  
 That hym myghte helpe of hys welkys wyhe  
 Ne of hys knobbis sittenge on hys chekis  
 Wel boued; he oynons garleek and; lekys  
 And; for to drynke stronge wyne as red; as blood;  
 Than wolde; he speke & crye as he wer wood;  
 And; whan he hadde wel dronke the wyne  
 Than wolde; he speke no word; but latyn  
 A felbe termes hadde he twe or thre  
 That he hadde lerned; of sum man of dextre

## Prologue

No wondyr is he herd; it al the day  
Andr eke ye knowe wel that a jay  
Can clepe watte as wel as can the rowe  
But who coude hym in other thynges grope  
Than had; he spent al hys phylsophye  
A questio quid queris wolde he cpe  
He was a gentyl hartot and a kynde  
A better felow shold; men not fynde  
He wolde; suffre for a quart of wyne  
A good; felow to haue hys contubyn  
A twelf monthe & excuse hym at the fulle  
Ful pryncely a fyncke eke coude he pulle  
Andr yf he fond; othwer a good; felalwe  
He wolde; teche hym anon to haue alwe  
In such caas of the archdekenes curs  
But yf mannys soule were in hys purs  
For in hys purs he shold; puny shyd; he  
Purs is the archdekenes helle sayd; he  
But wel I boote he lied; right in dede  
Of cursynge olght eche man to drede  
For cursynge wyl sle right as soylving saucth  
Andr also ware hym of a significaut  
In daunger hadde he at hys olben gyse  
Alle the yonge gyrlis of the dyocese  
Andr knell of hys counseyl & was of her rede  
A garbond; he hadde set vp on hys hede  
As greet as it were an alestake  
A wheler hadde he made hym of a Cake

## Prologue



**W**as hym ther wode a gentil pardonere  
 Of rouncevale hys frende & hys comper  
 That streyght was come fro the court of Rome  
 Wyful wolde he songe come hyther boue to me  
 Thys sompnour bar to hym a styf burdoun  
 Was neuer trompe of half so greet a soun  
 Thys pardoner had her as yelke as wey  
 And smoth it hynge as doth a styple of fley  
 Wy houses hynge hys sockis that he hadde  
 And there wyth hys sholdris ouer spradde  
 But than it lay by Culpous one and one  
 An hood for jolyte lured he none  
 For it was trussed vp in hys walet  
 Hym thoughte he wode vp on the nelbe get  
 Dysscheyld he saue hys cappe he wode al hure  
 Suche glarynge even hadde he as hath an hure  
 A Vernacle hadde he solvyd vp on hys cappe  
 Hys walet befor hym had he in hys lappe

## Prologue

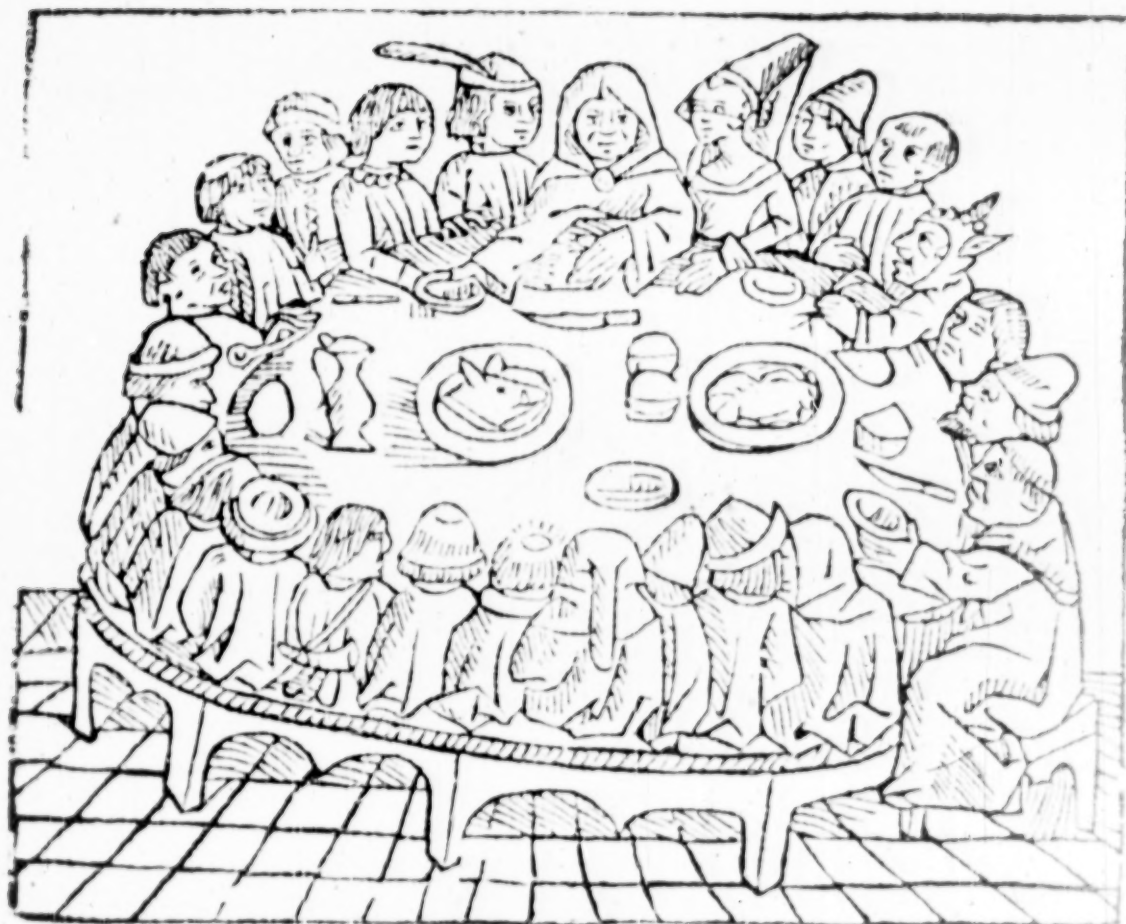
Brette ful of pardon come fro Rome al hool  
A Boye he hadde as smal as hath a goot  
No kerd; hadde he ne neuer sholde haue  
As smothe was it as it were nelbe shau  
I trowe he were a gheldyng; or a mare  
But of his craft from Werlpyt vnto here  
He was ther nobler such a pardonere  
For in his male he hadde a pyssyll beere  
Whiche that he sayde was our ladyes beyll  
He sayd; he hadde a gobet of the seyl  
That saynt peter hadde when that he went  
Up on the see tyl ihesus cryst hym sent  
He hadde a crosse of laton ful of stones  
And; in a glas he hadde pyggis bones  
But wyth thise reliques when that he fond;  
A poure person dwellyng; vp on lond;  
Up on a day he gat hym more moneye  
Than the person gat in monethis tyme  
And; thus had; he fayed; flateries & Japis  
He made the parson and; the pyppel his apis  
But truly to telle at the last  
He was in chyrch; an noble ecclesiast  
Wel coude he rede a lesson or a story  
But alderbest he song; an offertory  
For wel he wyste when that song; was sung;  
He moste preche and; file a whyle his tunge  
To wyne siluer as he ful wel coude  
Therefore he song; the merierly and; loude

**H**ow haue I told you shortly in a clause  
The state the aray the nobre & the cause  
Why that assembled was this cōpange  
In Southwerk at this gentyl hostelrye  
That hyghte the Takyng; faste by the kelle  
But now is tyme to you forth to telle  
How that we here be that ilke nyght  
When that we were in the hostery a light  
And; after wyll I telle of our viage  
And; al the remenaunt of our pylgrymage

## Prologue

But fyrst I you praye of your curtesye  
That ye ne aucte it not my Vylanye  
Though that I playnly speke in thys matere  
To telle you here wordys ande hys chere  
Ande though I speke here wordys proprely  
For thys ye knowe as wel as I  
Who shal a tale telle after a man  
He mooste reuerse as newe as he can  
Every wordy yf it be in hys charge  
Al speke he neuer so rudely ande so large  
Or elles he muste telle hys tale vntrewe  
Or see thyngis or feyne wordis newe  
He may not spare al though he were his broder  
He moot as wel say o wordy as another  
Crist spak hym self ful brode in holy wryt  
Ande wel ye boote no Vylany is it  
Eke plato sayth wwho so can it rede  
The wordy muste be cosyn to the dede  
Also I pray you foryeue it me  
Al though I sette not folk in her degre  
Here in thys tales as they sholdy stonde  
My wryt is short ye may wel vnderstonde

## Prologue



**W**het chere made our oste to vs euerychon  
 And to souper sette he vs anon  
 He serued vs wyth vytayll at the treste  
 Stronge was the wyne & wel drynke vs lyste  
 A semely man our oste was wyth alle  
 For to be a marchal in a lordes halle  
 A large man he was wyth open stepe  
 A feyter burgeys is ther non in chepe  
 Bold of hys speche and wel was y taught  
 And of manhood lacked he right nought  
 Eke ther to was he right a mery man  
 And after souper to pleyen he begon  
 And spak of myrthe among other thynges  
 Whan that we hadde made our rekenynges  
 He sayd thus nob lordynges treuly  
 Ye be to me right welcome ferly  
 For by my trolliche yf I shal not lye  
 I salb not thys yeer so mery a companye

## Prologue

At onys in thys herborow as noll  
Yege wolde I do you myrthe yf I myste holl  
And of a myrthe I am right noll be thought  
To do you ese andy it shal coste you nought  
Ye go to Caunterbury wardy gody you spece  
The blessful martyr quyte you your mece  
Andy wel ye boote as ye go se the weye  
Ye shapen you to talke andy to pleye  
For trewly confort ne myrthe is non  
To ryde by the wey dombe as a stoon  
Andy therfore wyll I make you dysport  
As I sande erst andy do you confort  
Andy yf it liketh you alle by one assent  
For to stonde at my Jugement  
Andy for to werke as I shal you say  
To morow whan ye ryden on the way  
No bly my fader soule that is dedy  
But ye be mery I shal purye you my fedy  
Holdy by your hondy wythoute more spere  
Our counsel shal not longe be to seche  
As thought it was not worth to make be wyse  
Andy grauntedy hym wythoute more a wyse  
Andy ludy hym save hys verdyt as hym lyse  
For dynges quady se noll herkeneth for the best  
But take it not I pray you in dysceyne  
Thys is the point to speke it soort and pleyne  
That eke of you to sherte wyth your weye  
In thys wyse shal we take thye  
To Caunterburywardy I mene it soo  
Andy homwardy se shal take othe tales two  
Of aventure that whilom haue befall  
Andy wythe of you keryth hym best of alle  
That is to save that tellyth in thys caas  
Tales of best sentence andy most solas  
Shal haue a souper of our alther cost  
Here in thys place sittynge by thys post  
Whan that we come ayeen from Caunterbury  
Andy for to make you the more mery

## Prologue

I wyl my self goodly wyth you ryde  
Ryght at myn olben cost ande be your gyde  
Ande who that wol my judgement wyth say  
Shortly shal paye al that is spent by the way  
Ande yf ye vouchsaf that it be so  
Tel me anone wythoute wordys moo  
Ande I wyl erly shawe me therfore  
Thys thynge was graunted ande othis swore  
Wyth ful glade herte & prepen hym also  
That he wolde vouchsaf that it be so  
Ande that he wolde be our gouernour  
Ande of oure talis Juge ande reportour  
Ande sette a seuer at a certayn pryce  
Ande wolde be welldy at hys deuyce  
Wyth ande wolbe ande alle by on assent  
We be accorded to hys judgement  
Ande there by on the wyne was fet anone  
We dronk ande to reste went we echone  
Wythoute eny longer tarrynge  
Amorow whan the day gan sprynge  
As was our hofe ande was al our cok  
Ande gadred to goe alle in a flock  
Ande forth we ryden litel more than paas  
Unto the waterynge of saynt Thomas  
Ande there our este gan hys hors artece  
Ande sayde harkeneth lordynge yf ye lyst  
Ye boote our forwarde ande I pou recorde  
Yf euensonge ande morow songe accorde  
Let se now who shal telle the fyrste tale  
As euer moot I drynke wyne or ale  
Who so wyl be rekel to my judgement  
Shal paye for al that is by the way spent

**W**ith draw cut or that ye further thynne  
Wher shal the fyrste tale begynne  
Seyng myght quod he my mayster & my lord  
Now draw wyth cut for that is myn accord  
Cometh hythyr quod he my lady Wyorelle  
Ande ye six clerk let by your shamesfinesse

## Prologue

He study not / lay on hond: every man  
Anon to draibon every wyght began  
And: schelly to telle as it was  
Were it be aventure fortune or cas  
The soth is thys the cut fyl on the knyght  
Of wyche ful blythe and: glady is every wyght  
And: telle he muste as it was reson  
By forlardy and: by composicion  
As ye shus herd: what nedeth wordys moo  
And: whan thys good: man salbe that it was soo  
As he that was wyse and: okepyent  
To kepe hys forlardy by hys fre assent  
He sayde sithnes I shal begynne the game  
What welcom he cut a goddys name  
Gode late be ryde & larkyn what I say  
And: wyth that word: he riden forth our way  
And: he began wyth right a mery chere  
And: sayde anone hys tale as ye shul here  
Here begynneth the knyghtis tale



## The knyghtis tale

**W**hylom as olde story telleth us  
 Ther was a duke that hygher Theseus  
 Of thekes he was lord and gouernour  
 And in hys tyme such a conquerour

That gretter was ther none vnder sonne  
 Ful many a rich contre had he wonne  
 That wyth hys wysedom and chyualrye  
 He conquered al the regne of femenye  
 That whylom was cleped Cithrea  
 And wedded the quene ypolita  
 And broughte hyr home in to hys contre  
 Wyth moche glorie and solempnyte  
 And eke hyr yonger syster emelye  
 And thus wyth vitory and melodye  
 Lete I this worthy duke to Athenes ryde  
 And all hys hoost in armes hym besyde  
 And certis yf it nere to long to here  
 I wolde haue tolde fully the matere  
 How wonne was the regne of femenye  
 By theseus and by hys chyualrye  
 And of the grette bataylle for the nones  
 Betwix Athenes and amafones  
 And how beseged was ypolita  
 The fayre hardy quene of Cithrea  
 And of the feste that was at hyr weddyng  
 And of the tempest at hyr home comyng  
 But al that thyng I moot as now forhere  
 I haue goddys boote a large felde to here  
 And wechken the oxen in the plow  
 The remanant of my tale is longe ynow  
 I wyl not lette eke none of this rolle  
 Let euery felow telle hys tale aboute  
 And let se now who shal the souper wyne  
 And there I lete I wyl agayn begynne

**O**f this duke of whom I make menaion  
 Whan he was come almost to the town  
 In al hys welthe and hys most pryde  
 He was ware as he cast hys eye a syde

## The kynghtis tale

Where that ther kneledy in the hygh way  
 A compaigne of ladyes thre and thre  
 Eche after other clady in clothes blake  
 But such a cry and such a woo they make  
 That in this world nys creature lyvinge  
 That herd such an other lymmentynge  
 And of this cry they holde neuer sentyn  
 Tyll they the ryngs of hys kyngdome sentyn  
 What folk be ye that at myn home comynge  
 Perturben soo my feste wyth cryng  
 Quod Thesus haue ye so gret enuye  
 Of myn honour that thus compleyne and crye  
 Or who hath you mysfoden or offended  
 And tel me yf it may be amended  
 And why that ye be clothed thus in black  
 The eldest lady of them alle spak  
 Whan she hadde swoluned wyth a dedly chere  
 That it was wylthe to see and to here  
 She sayd lord to whom fortune hath geue  
 Wyctory and as a conquerour to lye  
 Nought greueth vs your glory & your honour  
 But the leske you of mercy and socour  
 Haue mercy on our woo and dystresse  
 Som droppe of pyte thurgh thy gentylnesse  
 Up on vs wretchyd women let noll falle  
 For artis lord that is none of vs alle  
 That she ne hath be duchesse or a quene  
 Noll be we crytys as it is wel sene  
 Thanked be fortune and hyr fals whele  
 That nen astat ensurith to be wele  
 Noll certis lord to abyde your presence  
 Here in this temple of the godesse clemence  
 We haue be waytynge al this fourtenyght  
 Noll help vs lord sith yt lieth in thy myght  
**I** wretche which that wepe & wayle thus  
 Whylom wyf to kyng Campanus  
 That starf at thekes acursid be that day  
 And alle we that sen in this way

## The kynghis tale

And make al this lamentacion  
We losen alle our husbandis at that toun  
Whyles that the sege there aboute lay  
And yett noll the olde creon wel alway  
That lord is noll of Thebes that cyte  
Fulfilled of ire and iniquyte  
He for despyt and for his tyrannye  
To don the dede bodies bylonye  
Of alle our lordis whyle that he shalbe  
Hath alle the bodies on an heap y dralbe  
And wol not suffer hem by none assent  
Neither to be buryed ne to be brent  
But makyth boundis to ete hem in despyt  
And wyth that word wythout more respyt  
They fallen gowfynge and crye ptyuysly  
Haue on vs wretchyd wiminen som mercy  
And let our sorow synke in thy hert  
This gentyl duke of his courser stert  
Wyth herte ptyous wkenne he herde hem speke  
Hym thoughte his herte wolde breke  
Whan he sawe hem so ptyous and so maie  
That whylom were of so greet astate  
And in his armes he hem alle vp hent  
And hem comforted in ful good entent  
And swore his oth as he was trewe kynght  
He wolde do so ferforth his myght  
Up on the tyraunt Creon hym to breke  
That al the peple of grece shold speke  
Holt Creon was of Thebes y serued  
As he that hath his deeth wel deserved  
And right anon wythouten more abood  
His banner he dysplayde and forth he rood  
To Thebes warde and alle his oste beside  
No ner Athenes nolde he goo ne ryde  
Ne take his ese not fully half aday  
But on his wey that nyght he lay  
And sente anon Jocasta the quene  
And Emely his yonge suster sene

## The knyghtis tale

Unto the toun of Athenes to dwelle

And forth he rideth ther is nomore to telle

**O** he red statu of mars with spere & targe  
So shyneth in hys whyt baner large  
That alle the feldis glytten vp and down

And by hys baner born is hys penon

Of gold ful rich in whiche ther was y set

The mynotaur whiche he wan in crete

Thus rideth thys duke thys conquerour

And in hys oste of chualtre the flour

Thyl that he cam to Thebes and a lighte

Space in a feld there as he thought to fighte

But shortly for to speke of thys thyng

Wyth anon whiche was of Thebes kyng

He fought and slay hym manly as a knyght

In playn bataylle and put hys folk to flight

And at a salwe he wan the cite after

And wente a down wal spere and rafter

And to the ladies he restored agayn

The bodies of hir husbondis that were slayn

To do obseques as tho was the gyse

But it were al to long for to deuyse

The grete clamour and the weymentyng

That the ladies made at the brennyng

Of the bodies and the grete honour

That Theseus the nobyl conquerour

Doth to the ladies when they fro hym went

But shortly for to telle is myn entent

When that thys worthy duke thys Theseus

Hath Creon slayn and wan Thebes thus

Styl in the feld he toke al nyght hys rest

And dyde wyth al the wntre as hym lyst

He ransaked in the taas of bodies dede

Hem for to scape of sarneys and of wede

The pylours dyde hyr lesynesse and cure

Aftr the bataylle and the dyscomfure

And so befyl that in that taas they fond

Thorow gyrt wyth meny a greuous wound

## The knyghtis tale

Elbo ponge knyghtis lyyngz by and by  
Bothe in one harnays wrought ful richely  
Of whych elbo arate hygher that one  
And the other knyght hygher Palamon  
Not fully quyk ne fully ded they were  
But by hys cotte armur and by hys gem  
The heroldes knelbe hem best in speccal  
As that they were of the bloody ryal  
Of Thebes and of sustryn elbo ylore  
Out of the taas the pybours haue hem towre  
And haue hem carped soft in to the tent  
Of Theseus and he ful sone hem sent  
To Athens to dwelle there in prysoun  
Perpetuel he nolde no raunson  
And when this worthy duke hadde thus don  
He took hys hoost and hom he goth anon  
Wyth laurer colbned as a conquerour  
And there he lyueth in joye and in honour  
Terme of hys lyf what nedyth wordys moo  
And in a tour in angursh and wyth woo  
Dwellyth Palamon and hys felow arate  
For euermore ther may no gold hem quyte  
**S**hus passed yere by yere & day by day  
Tyl it fyl ones in a mornynge of may  
That Emely that fayrer was to seen  
Than is the lily by on the stalk green  
And fresher than may wyth floures nelbe  
For wyth the rose colour stroof hys helbe  
I not whych was the feyter of hem elbo  
Er it was day as was he wont to doo  
She was arysen and al redy dyght  
For may wol haue no skogard a nyght  
The seson prycketh euery gentyl herte  
And maketh hym out of hys slepe to sterte  
And sayth aryse and do thyne obseruances  
Thys makith Emely to haue Remembraunce  
To do honour to may and for to ryse  
I clothed fresh was she to dryse

## The knyghtis tale.

Her yekell her was broyded on a tresse  
Besyde her luf a longe yerde I gesse  
And in the gardyn at the sonne vprist  
She walkedy vp and down and ois hyr list  
She gadredy fflowris part whyt and rede  
To make a subtil chapelet for hyr heed  
And as an aungel heuenly she songe  
The grete tour that was so thycke and stronge  
Whych of the castel was cheyf dungeon  
There as the knyghtis were in pryson  
Of whych I toldy you and telle shal  
Was euene ioyuant to the gardyne wall  
There as thys Emely hady her pleyynge  
Bryght was the sonne & cleer that mornynge  
And Palamon thys woful prysoner  
As was hys wone by leue of hys gayler  
Was rysen and comed in the chambyr on hys  
In whych alle the noble cyte he syt  
And eke the gardyn ful of braunchis grene  
There as thys fresch Emely the skene  
Was in hyr walk and comed vp and down  
Thys sorowful prysoner thys palamoun  
Goth in the chambyr romynge to and fro  
And to hym self compleynedy of hys wo  
That he was born ful ofte he saydy alas  
And so woful by auenture andy cas  
That thorow a wyndow thys of many a barre  
Of yren greet andy squaare as ony sparr  
He cast hys eyen vp on Emelia  
And ther wyth he blente andy cryde a  
As though he were stongyn to the bert  
And wyth that cry arate anon vp stert  
And sayde cosyn myn what eyleth the  
That art so pale andy dedly on to see  
Why cryest thou who hath do the offence  
For goddis loue take all in pacience  
Our pryson/ for it may non other be  
Fortune hath yeu vs thys aduersite

## The knyghtis tale

Or ellis som ibyghed aspect or dysposicion  
Of saturne by som constellacion  
Hath geue be thys al they be hadde sworn  
So stooð the kene whan he were born  
We muste endure thys is the short and playn  
Thys palamon answeerd and sayd agayn  
Cosyn forsoth of thys oppnyon  
Thou hast a deyn ymagynacion  
Thys pryson causid me not to crye  
But I was hurt nold thurgh myn eye  
Unto my hert that wol my hane be  
The faynesse of a lady that I see  
Ponder in the gardyn comynge to and fro  
Is cause of al my crynge and my woo  
I not whither she be womman or goddesse  
But Venus it is sothly as I gesse  
And therbyth al on knees down he felle  
And sayd Venus yf it be thy wyl  
You in thys gardyn thus to transfigure  
Before me sorowful wretche thy creature  
Out of thys pryson help that we may scape  
And yf it be our destenye so be shape  
Be etern word to dye in pryson  
Of our lagnage haue som coupassyon  
That is so wolbe y brought by tyrannye  
And wyth that word arcyte gan crye  
Where as the lady went to and fro  
And wyth that sight her beaute hurte hym so  
That yf palamon were woundedy sore  
Arcyte is hurt as moche as he or more  
And wyth a spgh he sayde ptyously  
The fresh beaute me sleeth sodenly  
Of hyr that cometh in the ponder place  
And but I haue hyr mercy and hyr grace  
That I may see her at the leste wey  
I nam but dede ther is nomore to sey

## The knyghtis tale

**T**his palamond whan he this wordis herd  
Dyspytously he loketh and answerd  
Whethir saist þ this in ernest or in play  
Nay quod arcyte in ernest by my fay  
Gods helpe so me lust ful lypyl to play  
Thys palamon gan knyghte hys brolbis tway  
Hyt were quod he to the no gret honour  
For to be fals ne for to be a traitour  
To me that am thy cosyn and thy brother  
I sworn full depe and eke of vs to other  
That neuer for to dym in the pyyn  
Tyl that the deeth departe shal vs twayne  
Neyther of vs in loue to hyndre other  
Ne in no other caas my leue brother  
And that thou sholdest truly further me  
In euery caas as I shold further the  
Thys was thyn oth and myn certayn  
I woot it wel thou darst it not wythsayn  
Thus art thou of my counsel wythoute doute  
And now thou woldyst falsly be aboute  
To loue my lady whom I loue and serue  
And euer shal tyl that myn lerte sterue  
Now certis fals arcyte thou shalt not soo  
I loued hyr fyrst and told the my woo  
As to my counseyl & to my brother sworn  
To further me as I haue told byfor  
For wher thou art bounden as a knyght  
To helpe me yf it lye in thy myght  
Or ellis art thou false I dar wel seyn  
Thys arcyte ful proudly spak agayn  
Thou shalt quod he be rather fals than I  
But thou art fals I telle the biterly  
For par amour I buyd ser fyrst er thou  
What wilt thou seyn/thou wifest not yet now  
Whethir she be a woman or a goddesse  
Thyn is affection of holynesse  
And myn is loue as to a creature  
For wher I told the myn auenture

## The knyghtis tale

As to my cosyn and my brother sworn  
I suppose thou loudest hyr here before  
Wost thou not wel the olde clerkis salwe  
That wyl shal geue a loue ony salwe  
Loue is a gretter salwe by my panne  
Than may be geue of ony erthly manne  
And therefore positif salwe & such decree  
Is broken alday for loue in eche degre  
A man most nedis loue magre hyr hed  
He may not flee it though he shold be ded  
Al be he mayde wydolwe or wyf  
And eke it is not likly al thy lyf  
To stonde in her grace nomore shal I  
For wel thou wost thy self veryly  
That thou and I be dampned to pryson  
Perpetually be gayneth no raunson  
We serue as dyd the foundis for the bone  
They faught al day and yet her part was none  
Till cam a curte while that they were so wyroth  
And haue alwey the bone betwix hem bothe  
And therefore at the kyngis court my brother  
Eche man for hym self ther is non other  
Loue yf thou list for I loue and ay shal  
And sothly lief brother thye is al  
Here in thys pryson must we endure  
And euery of us take hyr auenture  
Gret was the serf & longe betwix hem twey  
Yf that I hadde leysur for to sey  
But to the effect it happed on a day  
To telle it you shortly as I may

**W**orthy duke that hyghte parotheus  
That felow was to duke Theseus  
Sith thilk day þ they were childre lyte  
Was come to athenes hyr felow to visite  
And for to pleye as he was wont to doo  
For in thys world he loued noman soo  
And he loued hym as tenderly agayn  
So wel they loued as old fokes sayn

## The knyghtis tale

That whan that onz was dede sothly to telle  
Hys felaw went & sought hym down in helle  
But of that story lyst me not to endyte  
Duke partheus loued wel arcyte  
And hadde hym knolwe at theles peer by peer  
And fynally at the requeste and praper  
Of partheus wythout eny fatynson  
Duke Theseus leet hym out of pryson  
Frelly to go wher hym list our al  
In such a gyse as I you telle shal  
Thos was the forbard playnly to endyte  
With wyse duke Theseus and hym arcyte  
That yf so were that arcyte were founde  
Euer in hys lyf by day or by stounde  
In ony contr of thys duke Theseus  
And he were caught it was acordyd thus  
That wyth a slyberd he shold lese hys hedy  
For was non othre remedy ne neede  
But takyng hys leue & honybard hym spedde  
Let hym helldar hys necke neth to wydde  
Hob greet sorow nold suffryth arcyte  
Hys deith he feleth thurgh hys herte smyte  
He wepeth waypleth & cryeth ppyuysly  
To see hym self he wayteth ppyuysly  
He sayd alas the day that I was born  
Nold is my pryson worse than byforn  
Nold is me shypyn eternally to dwelle  
Nought in purgatory but in helle  
Alas that euer knelwe I partheus  
For ellis hadde I dwelt wyth Theseus  
Y fetterd in hys pryson euer moo  
Than hadde I be in ease and not in woo  
Only the sight of hys whom that I serue  
Though that I neuer see grace may deserue  
Wold haue suffysyd yght ynow for me  
O dere cosyn Palamon quod he  
Thyn is the vyctory of thys aventure  
Ful blyssful in pryson mayst thou endure

## The knyghtis tale

In pryson nay artis but in paradys  
Wel hath fortune to the turned the dysce  
That haste the sighte of her and I thabsence  
For possyble it is sithnes thou hast hir presence  
And art a knyght a worthy man and able  
That by som cas syn fortune is chaungeable  
Thau mayst som tyme to thy desire attayne  
But I that am exyled and lareyne  
Of alle grace and so in gret despayr  
That ther nys water er the fyre ne eyr  
Ne creature that of hem maked is  
That may me lele or do comfort in thys  
Wel oughte I sterue in wanhope ond dysce  
For wel my lyf my lust and my gladnes  
A kas why plapnen men so in comune  
On purueaunce of god or of fortune  
That peueth hem ofte in meny wyse  
Wel better than hem self can deuyse  
Som men desire to haue rychesse  
That cause is of murdre or gret siknesse  
And som man wolde out of hys pryson feryn  
That in hys hous of hys meyne is sleyn  
Insynpt harmes he in thys matere  
We boot not what thyng we praye here  
We faren as he that dronke is as a mous  
A dronken man bot wel he hath an hous  
But he bot not which is þ right wey thider  
And to a dronkyn man the wey is slider  
And art is in thys worlde so fare we  
We sekyn faste after felcherye  
But we goo wronge ful ofte trewly  
Thus may we say alle and namely I  
That wende haue had a gret oppynyon  
That and I myghte scape out of pryson  
Than hadde I be in joye and in parfyt hile  
Eher noll I am exyled fro myn wele  
Synnes I may not se you Emelpe  
I ne am but ded ther is no remedye

## The knyghtis tale

Upon that other side palamon  
Whan that he byste arcyte was gon  
Such sorow he makyth that the grette tour  
Resounded of hys pelyng and clamour  
The pure fetteris on hys shynys grette  
Were of hys byttere salt tereis wet  
Allas quod he arcyte cosyn myn  
Of al our strif godd boote the fruyt is thyn  
Thou walkest noli in thekes at thy large  
And of my woo thou peuest lypyl charge  
Thou mayst say thou hast wysedom & mannes  
Assemble alle the folk of our kynrede  
And make warre so sharpe in thys contre  
That by som auenture or by som tete  
Thou mayst haue hys to lady and to byf  
For whom I muste nedis lese my lyf  
For as by way of possibylite  
Synnes thou art at large of pryson fre  
And art a lord grette is thyn auantage  
More than is myn that sterue here in a cage  
For I may wepe & weyle whyllis that I lyue  
Wyth al the woo that pryson may me geue  
And eke wyth payne that soue me penyth also  
That doubtly al my tourment and my woo  
Therbyth the fyre of Iakuspe by stert  
Wyth ynn hys breste and sent hym by the hert  
So woody that he lykly was to beholde  
The boy tre or assen dede or colde  
That sayde se o cruel goddes that gouerne  
The world wyth byndyng of your word eterne  
And wyrtyn in the tabyl of the athamant  
Your parlement & your etern grant  
What is mankynde more vnto you holde  
Than is the sheep that woukyth in the folde  
For slayn is man right as anothyr breste  
And dwellyth eke in pryson and in arest  
And hath siknesse and gret aduersite  
And ofte tyme gyltless parde

## The knyghtis tale

What gouernaylle is in thys prescience  
That gyftlees turmentyth Innocence  
And yet entresyth thys al my penaunce  
That man is bounde to hys obseruaunce  
For goddis sake to lettyn of hys wyll  
There as a best may at hys lust fulfyll  
And whan a best is dede he hath no payne  
But after hys deeth man may wepe & pleyne  
Thoughe in thys world he haue care and wo  
Withoute doute it may stonde so  
The answer of thys lete I to deuyne  
But wel I boote in this world greet payne is  
Alas I see a serpent or a theef  
That many a trew man hath do myscheyf  
Soon at his large & where hym list may turne  
But I must be in pryson thourgh saturne  
And thourgh hym vnhappy and eek woode  
That hath destroyd wel nygh al the blood  
Of thykes wyth hys wast wallis wyde  
And Venus sleeth me in that other side  
For Ialousye and feer of hym aryfte  
Nol I wol I seynt of Palamon alyte  
And lete hym in hys pryson styll duelle  
And of arate forth I wold you telle  
The somer passed the nyghtis way long  
Entreathe he doubte wyse the paynes strong  
Bothe of the louer and of the prysoner  
I ne boote who hath the losfullest myster  
For shortly to save thys palamon  
Perpetuelly is dampned to pryson  
In cheynes and in fetters to be dede  
And arate is exiled on hys lode  
For euer more as out of that contre  
For neuer more shal he hys lady se  
Nol louers are I nol thys question  
Who hath the worse of arate or palamon  
That one may se hys lady day by day  
But in pryson muste he dwelle allway

## The knyghtis tale

That other wher hym lyst may ryde or goo  
But se hys lady shal he neuer moo  
Nolb demyth as ye lyst ye that can  
For I wyl telle forth as I began  
Whan that arate to These come was  
Ful ofte aday he swelte and sayde alas  
For se hys lady shal he neuer moo  
And shortly to conclude alle hys woo  
So moche sorow he hath creature  
That is or shal he wyle the world may dure  
Hys sleep hys mete hys drynk is hym kerast  
That lene he way and drye as is a shaft  
Hys epen holow and grisly to be holde  
Hys selbe fawle and pale as ashen colde  
And solitary he was and euer a lone  
And waylyng al the nyght makyng his mone  
And yf he herd song or mstrument  
Than wolde he wepe he myght not stent  
So feble were hys spritis and so bolbe  
And chaunged so that noman coude knolbe  
Hys speche ne hys voys though men it herde  
As in hys gyte for all the world it ferde  
Nought only lyke the louers maladye  
Of heros but rather y lyk to many  
Engendryd of humour malencolye  
Beforn in his wille fantastye  
And shortly turned was al vp so down  
Bothe habyt and dysposicion  
Of hym this woful louer dan arate  
What shold I of hys woo alday endyte  
Whan he endured hadde a yere or thre  
This cruel turment this payne and woo  
At These in hys contre as I sayde  
Upon a nyght in slepe as he hym layde  
Hym thoughte hold that the wynged Mercury  
Beforn hym stode and sad hym be mery  
Hys slepy perde he had in hond vp right  
An hat he wende Upon hys hris bryght

## The knyghtis tale

Amyd was thys god as he took kepe  
As he was when argus took hys slepe  
And said hym thus to athenes thou shalt wede  
There is the shap of thy woo an ende  
And with that worde arate albook and stert  
Now treibly how fore that me smert  
Quod he to athenes wyl I fare  
He fore no drede of deth shal I spare  
To se my lady that I loue and serue  
In her presence recke I not to sterue  
And wyth that word he caughte a myroure  
And salbe that chaunged was hys colour  
And salbe hys bysage al in anothyr kynde  
And right anon it ran hym in hys mynde  
That sythnes hys face was so dysfugured  
Of maladye the whyche he hadde endured  
He myght wel yf that he hire hym wolbe  
Lyue in athenes euermore vnkynolbe  
And se hys lady wel nyxte day by day  
And right anon he chaunged hys aray  
And cladyd hym as a poure laborer  
And abone saue only a poure sauer  
That knelbe hys pryuyte and al hys mas  
Whyche was dysguyfed rouly as he was  
To athenes is he gon the next way  
And to the court he wente vp on a day  
And at the gate he profered hys scrupse  
To durye & to dralbe & what men wold deuyse  
And shortly of thys mater forto seyn  
He fil in office towarde a chambyrleyn  
The whyche that was dwellyng wyth Emelye  
For he was wyse and wel coude aspye  
Of euery seruaunt whyche that serued there  
Wel coude he selbe wode and watyr here  
For he was yonge and myghty for the nonys  
And thereto he was stronge & byge of bones  
To do that ony wight hym coude deuyse  
A yer or ilbo he was in thys scrupse

## The knyghtis tale

Page in the Chymbr of Emely the bryghte  
Andi Pheylotrat he sayd that he byghte  
But hylf so wel a boued man as he  
He was ther non in court of hys degre  
He was so gentyl of condiaon  
That thurgh al the court was hys renoun  
Ther sayde that it were grete charyte  
That Theseus wold enhaunse hys degre  
Andi put hym in a woyschypful scrupse  
There that he myghte hys Vertu exercise  
Andi thus bytym a whyle hys name sprong  
Wothe of hys dedis andi of hys good tynge  
That theseus hath take hym so nere  
That of hys chymbr he made hym a squere  
Andi gaf hym gold to mayntene hys degre  
Andi eke men brought hym out of his contre  
Fro peer to peer ful pryncely hys wente  
But honestly andi stychly he it spente  
That noman wondred holw that he it hadde  
Andi thre peer in thys wyse hys lyf he ladde  
Andi lere hym in pees andi eke in werre  
There was noman that Theseus hadde derre

And in this blisse lere I nold arate  
Andi speke I wyll of palamon alyte  
In derlynesse horrible 2 in streng pryson  
Thys seuen peer hath lere thys palamon  
For pyned what for woo andi dyscreesse  
Who feltyth dolubyl woo andi hupnesse  
But palamon that boue dyscreyneth soo  
That woo out of hys wyte he goth for woo  
Andi eke thereto he is a prysoner  
Perpetuel andi not only for a peer  
Who coude ryme in englyssh pryncely  
His martirdom forsothe it am not I  
Therefore I passe as lightly as I may  
Oyt fyll in that seuenth yere in may  
The thyrde nyght as olde folke sayn  
That all thys story tellen more playn

## The knyghtis tale

Were it by aventure or deseyne  
As that whan a thyng is happy it shal be  
That sone after the mydnyght palamon  
We helpe of a frend broke hath hys prysoun  
And fleeth the cite as sone as he may goo  
For he hadde yue hys gayler drynke soo  
Of a clarette made of a certayn wyne  
Wyth nerrotises and Ope of thebes fyne  
That all nyght though men wold hym shrike  
The gayler so slept he myght not awake  
And thus he fleeth as faste as he may  
The nyght was short & faste by the day  
That nedys cost he muste hym self hyde  
And to a groue faste there beside  
Wyth dredful foot than stalketh palamon  
For shortly this was hys oppynyon  
That in that groue he wold hym hyde alday  
And in the nyght than wold he take his way  
To thebes ward hys frendis for to prey  
On Ekeus to helpe hym to liberty  
And shortly eyther he wold lese hys lyf  
Or wyne fayre Emelye vnto hys wyf  
Thys is the effect and the entent playn  
Now wyf I turne to arcyte agayn  
That lytel wyse holt nygh was hys care  
Tyl that fortune had brought hym in the snare  
The mery lark messenger of day  
Salueth in hys songe the morow gray  
And fyrre phebys riseth vp so bryght  
That al the orient lausyth of the sight  
And wyth hys sermyns dryeth the greues  
The siluer droppe hangynge on the leues  
And arcyte that in the court ryal  
Wyth Ekeus hys squyer pryncypal  
Is rylen and loketh on the mery day  
And forto do hys obseruaunce to may  
Remembryng on the poynt of hys desire  
He on hys courser startlyng as the fyre

## The knyghtis tale

Is ryden in to the feldis hym to pleye  
Out of the court there it a myle or thre  
And to the groue of wyche that I you tolde  
By aventure his wey he gan to holde  
To make hym a garland of the grene  
Were it of bodbynne or of halbothorn leues  
And wolde he songe apens the sonne stene  
May wyth al thy folwris and thy grene  
Welcome be thou fressh fayre may  
In hope that I som grene gete may  
And for his courser wyth a lusey bert  
In to the groue ful hastely he stert  
And in a path he comede by and down  
There as by aventure thys palamon  
Was in a bussh that noman myght hym se  
For fore a ferd of his deeth was he  
No thyng he knew he that thys was arcyte  
God! boote he wolde haue trolbede it ful lyte  
But soth is sayd go sithen many yeris  
That feld hath eyen and wode hath eris  
Hyt is ful fayr aman to bere hym cun  
For alday men mete at vnsset scrupn  
For lytyl wente arcyte of his felalbe  
That was so nygh to herkyn al his salbe  
Whan that arcyte hadde comede al his fyll  
Palamon in the lusey nobl sittynth seyll  
And arcyte forge al the roundel luseyly  
In to a feudy he fyll sodenly  
As doon thys louers in hyr queynte gyris  
Nobl in the crop and nobl in the britis  
Nobl by nobl down as toket in a belle  
Right as the fryday sothly forto telle  
Nobl it shyneth nobl it rayneth fast  
Ryht so gan guerrey Venus ouer cast  
The lertis of hir folk right as her day  
Is guenful/ right so chaunged/ hir amy  
Selde is the fryday all the wode lyl  
Whan that arcyte hadde songe he gan to fil

## The knyghtis tale

And he set hym down wythoute ony more  
Alas quod he the day that I was bore  
Holt longe Iuno thurgh thy cruelte  
Wylt thou berien thekes the cyte  
Alas y brought is to confusion  
The bloody ryal of Cadme and amphyon  
Of Cadmus whych was the first man  
That thekes bylt or first the tun legay  
And of the cyte first was crowned kyng  
Of his lynage am I and of his offsprynge  
We betray lyne as of the stok ryal  
And now I am so kaptif and so thral  
That he that is my mortal enemy  
I serue hym and am his squyer puerly  
And yet doth me Iuno wel more shame  
For I dar not be knowe myn oghen name  
But there as I went was to lychte arcyte  
Now hysht I whylestrat not worth a myte  
Alas thou fel mare alas thou Iuno  
Thus your ire hath our lynage al fordo  
Saue only me and wretchyd Palamon  
That Theseus martyrth in pryson  
And ouer all this to sle me viterly  
Loue hath his fery dart so brennyngly  
It stykyd though my trell careful hert  
That shapen was erst my deth than my skert  
Ye sle me wyth your epen Emelpe  
Ye be the cause wherfore that I dye  
Of al the remenaunt of myn other care  
Ne sette I not the mountaunce of a tare  
So that I coude do aught to your plesaunce  
And wyth that word he fyl down in a traunce  
A longe tyme and aftirward he vp stert  
Thys palamon that thoughte thorow his hert  
He felt a cold siberd sodenly glyde  
For ix he quoke he nolde no lengyt abyde  
And whan that he hath herd arates tale  
As he were wood wyth fere ded and pale

## The knyghtis tale

He seynt hym up out of the bussh thyeke  
And sayd arcepe fals traptour thyeke  
Nolw art thou sent that buest my lady so  
For whom that I haue thys weyne and woo  
And art my blood & to my counceyl sworn  
And I ful ofte haue told the here before  
And hast be iaped the duke & the  
And falsly hast chaunged thy name thus  
I wyl be dede or ellis thou shalt dye  
Thou shalt not loue my lady Emelye  
But I wyl loue her only and no mo  
For I am palamon thy mortal fo  
And though I haue no wepyn in thys place  
But out of pryson am stert by grace  
I drede not outher thou shalt dye  
Or thou ne shalt not loue Emelye  
Ther es whyeke thou wilt/thou shalt not astert  
Thys Arcepe wylth ful despytous her  
Whan he hym knelede & herd hys tale herde  
As fyere as syon pulled out hys slyerde  
And sayd thus by god that sytt aboue  
Here it that thou art seke and wooody for loue  
And eke that thou no weyne hast in this place  
Thou sholdest neuer out of thys growe pace  
That thou ne sholdyst dye of myn hond  
For I desye the surete and the bond  
Whyeke that thou sayst I haue made to the  
What verrey fole thynk that loue is fre  
And I wol loue hys maye al thy myght  
But for as muche as thou art a knyght  
And wyllyngst to darayne here by bataylle  
Haue here my trouthe to morow I wil not faile  
Wythout wytyng of ony othyr wyght  
That here I wyl be founden as a knyght  
And bynggen harnes wyght ynolw for the  
And ekes the best & leue the worst for me  
And mete & drynk thys nyght wyl I bynge  
Inolw for the & clothis for thy beddyng

## The knyghtis tale

And yf so be that thou my lady bynne  
And sle me in thys wode that I am inne  
Thou mayst wel haue thy lady as for me  
Thys palamon answerd I graunte hyt the  
And thus they be departid tyl amorois  
Whan either of he hath leid his feith to sorow  
Occuyped out of alle charyte  
O regne that woldest haue no felow wyth the  
Ful soth is sayd that loue ne lordshyp  
Wyl not hys thankes haue ony felshyp  
We fynde thus of arcyte and palamon  
Arcyte is ryden anon in to the town  
And on the morow anon or it were lycht  
Ful pryuely thow barneys hath he dryght  
Bothe suffeyment and mete to darrepyne  
The bataylle in the feld sett by hem tweyne  
And on hys hors allone as he was born  
He carped the barneys hym before  
And in the groue at tyme and place set  
Thys arcyte and thys palamon been met  
Tho chaunge gan the colour in her face  
Ryght as the hunters in regne of trace  
That stondeth at the gape wyth a spere  
Whan huntid is the lion and the bere  
And heryth hym come assyng in the greys  
And breketh bothe bolles and eke leys  
And thynketh here cometh my mortal enemy  
Wythoute fayle he muste be ded or I  
For eyther I moste sle hym atte gape  
Or he muste sle me yf I mys haue  
So ferd they in chaungyng of her salwe  
As fer as ony of hem other knelwe  
Ther nas no good day ne saluynge  
But streyght wythoute wordis of restryng  
Euerych of hem helpyth to arme other  
As frendly as he were hys olben brother  
And aftir that wyth sharpe speris stronge  
They foynen ech at other wonder longe

## The knyghtis tale

Thou myghtyest bene that thyse palamon  
In hys fyghtyng were a wood? upon  
And as a cruel tygre was crepte  
As wylde byrds gan they to gedre smyte  
That froten wylt as foom for yre wood?  
Up to the ancle foughe they in her blood?  
And in this wyse I lete hem fyghtyng dwelle  
And forsoth I wyl of thesesus pou telle  
The descenpe mynyster general  
That executeth in the world oure al  
The pururaunce that god hath seyn byforn  
So straunge it is þ though the world hath sworn  
The contrary of a thyng? By ye or nay  
Yet somtyme it shal falle by on a day  
That fallyth not eft in a thousand? yere  
For certynly oure appetitis her  
Be it of pces hate warre or loue  
Al is rebeld? by the sighte alone  
Thys mene I noll be myghty Thesus  
That forto hunte is so desirous  
And namely at the grete hert in may  
That in hys led? ther dwyllyth hym no day  
That he mys clad? and redy forto ryde  
Wyth hunte and? horn & houndis hym byside  
For in hys huntynge hath he such? delyte  
That it is al hys ioye and? hys appetyte  
To be hym self the grete lertis hane  
For aftyr Mars he scrupth noll dyane  
Cleer was the day as I haue told? or thys  
And Thesus wyth al ioye and? blys  
Wyth hys ypolita the fayre quene  
And? Emely y clothed? al in grene  
And? huntynge? ben they ryden ryally  
And? to the groue that stood? ther fast by  
In which? ther was an hert as men hym tolde  
Duke thesesus the strenght wylf hath holde  
And? to the launde he rydyth ful ryght  
For thider was the hert wot to haue his flight

## The knyghtis tale

And? ouer a brook and? so forth on hys wey  
The duke bold? haue acours of hym or tibe  
Wythoundis such as he list to comande  
And? when thys duke was come to the faunde  
Under the sonne he lokyd? & that anon  
He was waar of arcyte and? Palamon  
That foughten breme as it were both tbo  
The bryght swerdis wente to and? fro  
So hydously that wyth the leste strook  
He semyd? that it wold? haue fellyd? on eok  
But what they were nothynge he ne boot  
Thys duke wyth his sporis his courser smote  
And? at a sterre he was fetlwyx hem tbo  
And? pullyd? out hys swerd? and? sayd? ho  
Nomore on payne of lesynge of your hed?  
We myghty marce anon he shal be ded?  
That smyteth ony strouk that I may se  
But tellyth me what myster men ye be  
That ben so hardy to fyght here  
Wythout ony iuge or other offycere  
As though it were in lystis ryally  
Thys palamon answerd? hastily  
And? sayd? syre what nedyth wordis moo  
We haue the deth deserued? bothe tbo  
Tbo woful wretchis be we tbo caryngs  
That ben encombred? of oure oune luyngs  
And? as thou art a ryghtful lord? and? iuge  
He yue vs neyther mercy ne refuge  
But sle me fyrst for saynt charyte  
But sle my felow eke as wel as me  
Or sle hym first for theyh þ? knolwe hym lyte  
He is thy mortal foo thys is arcyte  
That fro thy bond? was lymssed? on hys hed?  
For whyle he hath deserued? to be ded?  
For thys is he that cam to thy rate  
And? sayd? that he hyghte Phyllosrate  
Thus he hath iaped? the ful many a peer  
And? thou hast maad? hym thy chyef squyer

## The knyghtis tale

And thys is he that loueth Emelye  
For sithnes the day is come that I shal dye  
I make pleynly my confession  
That I am that woful palamon  
That hath thy pryson broke wickedly  
I am thy mortal foo and he am I  
That loueth so hote Emelye the bryght  
That I wyl dye here present in her sight  
Therefore I age deth of my jelouyse  
But sle my felow in the same wyse  
For bothe haue we deserued to be slayn

**H**is worthy duke answered and agayn  
And said this is a short conclusion  
Your olben mouth by your confession  
Hath dampned you and I wyl it recorde  
But nedyth not to payne you wyth the corde  
Ye shul be ded by myghty mares the rede  
The quene anon for verray wommanhode  
Gan for to wepe and so dede Emelye  
And alle the ladies in that compaign  
Gret pyte was it as hem thoughte alle  
That euer such a chauce shold be falle  
For gentylmen they were and of grette estat  
And nothynge but for loue was thys delat  
And salbe byr bloody woundis wyde and sore  
And alle cryden bothe lasse and more  
Haue mercy lord vpon vs wymmen alle  
And on her bare knees down they falle  
And wold haue kyssed hys feet ther as he stood  
Tyl at the laste slakyd was hys mood  
For pyte renneth sone in gentyl herte  
And though he first for ire quoke and sterre  
He considered shortly in a claufe  
The trespass of them bothe and eke the cause  
And al though that hys ire hys gilt accusyd  
Yet in hys reson he hem bothe excusyd  
As thus he thoughte wel that euery man  
Wyl helpe hym self in loue as he can

## The knyghtis tale

Ande delpyer hym self out of pryson  
Ande eke in hys herte he hadde compassion  
Of wommen for they were euer in one  
Ande in hys gentil herte he thoughte anon  
Ande softe vnto hym self he sayde fy  
Wp on a lord that wyl haue no mercy  
But be a spoun bothe in word ande dede  
To hem that ben in repentaunce ande drede  
As wel as a proude dyspytous man  
That wyl mayntene that he first began  
That lord hath lytel of dyscession  
That in suche a cas can no dyspysion  
But wepeth pryde ande humblesse after one  
Ande shortly whan hys ire is thus agon  
He gan to loke on hem with even blak & vglye  
Ande spak thys wordis al on hys  
The god of loue a benedict  
Holt myghty ande holt grete a lord is he  
Agayns his myght ther gayneth non of staakyl  
He may be clepyd a god for hys myrakyl  
For he can make of hys owen gyse  
Of euery herte as hym list deuyse  
So here thys arcyte & thys palamon  
That queyntly cam out of my pryson  
Ande myght a frynd in thekes ryally  
Ande knowen I am her mortal enemy  
Ande that her deeth lyth in my myght also  
Ande yet hath loue maugre her even two  
Brought hem hyther bothe for to dre  
Holt lokyth is not thys an hygh folys  
Who may be a foele but yf that he loue  
Behold for goddis sake that sittyth a loue  
Se holt they blede be they not wel awayd  
Thus hath her lord the god of loue hem payd  
Her wages ande her fees of her scruple  
Ande yet they wene for to be ful wyse  
That serue loue for aught that may falle  
But thys is yet the beste game of alle

## The knyghtis tale

That she for whom they haue thys jolyte  
Can hem therefore as mocke thank as me  
She wot nomore of al thys hoot fare  
Be god? than woot a Cuckolb or an hare  
But al must be assayd? hoot or cold?  
A man muste be a fool yonge or old?  
I woot it by my self ful longe a goon  
For in my tyme a seruaunt was I one  
And? therefore seithys I knowe of loupes payne  
And? wot how sore hys can a man dystreine  
As he that hath be caught in thys laas  
I wol foryeue al hoodly thys trespass  
And? at the request of the quene y knelith here  
And? eke of Emely my suster dere  
And? ye shul sothe anon Bntw me siber  
That neuer mo ye shal my contre dere  
He make warre on me nyght ne day  
But be my frendes in al that ye may  
I wol foryeue thys trespass euerydeel  
And? they hym swar hys a yonge fair & weel  
And? hym of lordshyp and? mercy prayde  
And? he hem grauntyd? & thus he sayd?

¶ O speke of worthy lynage & rycheffe  
Though y she were a quene or a princeff:  
Eke of yow sothe is worthy doubtles  
To wedde when tyme is but natheles  
I speke as for my suster Emely  
For whom ye haue this serif & thys jealousy  
Ye woot your self ye may not wedde tibo  
At onys theygh ye fighte euer mo  
That one of you al be hym both or leef  
He mot go pye in an iuy leef  
Thys is to say she may not haue sothe  
Al be ye neuer so ielous and? so sothe  
And? for thy I you put in thys degre  
That eke of you shal haue hys destene  
As hym is shapyn & serkyn in what wyse  
So here youre ende of that I shal deuyse

## The knyghtis tale

my wyf is thys for plat conclusioun  
Wythoute any more explycatioun  
yf that you lyketh take it for the beste  
That euerych of you shal go where hym liste  
freely wythout raunson or daunger  
And thys day fyfty wykes for ne neer  
Euerych of you shal brynge an E knyghtis  
Armed for lystis bp at alle rightis  
Al redy to darreyne here by batayll  
And thys schote I polb wythout fayll  
Upon my trolbthe & as I am trelb knyght  
That wlethir of you tothe hath that myght  
That is to sey wlethyr he or tholb  
May wylth his hundred as I spak of noll  
Sle hys contrary or out of lystis dryue  
Hym shal I geue Emely to wyue  
To whom that fortune geueth so fayne a grace  
The lystis shal I make on thys place  
And god so wysly on my solble welbe  
As I shal euene iuge be and trelbe  
Ye shul non othyr ende wyth me make  
That one of you ne shal be ded or take  
And yf ye thynke thys is wel sayd  
Sayeth your auyes and holde you payd  
Thys is your ende and your conclusioun  
Who lokyth noll lightly but palamon  
Who spryngeth bp for Iope but arcyte  
Who coude telle or who coude endyte  
The Iope that made is in this place  
When thescus hndde do so fayne a grace  
But down a knees went euery wyght  
And thanked hym wyth al her myght  
And namely the Ekeins ofte sithe  
And thus wyth good hope and herte blythe  
They take her leue and homeward they ryde  
To thes wyth hys olde walkis wyde  
I trolbe men wolde it deme negligence  
Yf I forgete to telle the dyspence

## The knyghtis tale

Of Theseus that goth so besily  
To make vp the lystis ryally  
That such a nobyl theatre as it was  
I dar wel say in thys world ther nas  
The cypreite a myle thre of was aboute  
Wallid byth soon & dely round aboute  
Found was the shap in maner of a compas  
Ful of degrees the height of sixty paces  
That when a man was set in on degre  
He litted not his felow for to se  
Eschward ther was a gate of marbel whyt  
Westward such another in thopposite  
And shortly to conclude such a place  
Was none in erthe in so lytyl space  
For in the lond ther was no craftis man  
That geometry or ars metric can  
Ne portreture ne keruall of ymages  
That theses ne pay mete and wages  
The theatre for to make and deuyse  
And for to do his rite and his sacrifice  
He eschward hath vp on the gate aboue  
In worship of Venus goddesse of loue  
Do make an auter and an Oratory  
And on the westward in memory  
Of marce hath he made such another  
That coste large of gold a forthyr  
And northward in a tur of the wal  
Of whyt alabastr and red coral  
An Oratory rich for to see  
In worship of dyane goddesse of chastyte  
Hath Theseus do brought in nobyl wyse  
But yet hadde I forgete to deuyse  
The nobyl keruynge and the portreturis  
The shap the countenaunce and the figuris  
That weren in the oratories thre  
First in the temple of Venus thou mayst se  
Wrought in the wal ful petously to be holde  
The brokyn slepis and the sighis colde

## The knyghtis tale

The salyrdi terys and the waymentynge  
The feryf strokes and the desyrynge  
That boues folkes in thys world enduren  
The othes that her couenauntis assuren  
Pleasur hope desire and fool hardynesse  
Beaute and yongthe laudry and rychesse  
Charmys and sorcery lesynges and flaterye  
Dyspense besynesse and jeholysye  
That wered of yelow gooldes a garbond  
And a Cuckold sittynge on her hond  
Jfeestis instrumentis carollis and daunsis  
Fust and aray and alle the cyrcumstauncis  
Of hys whych that I rekene and tell shal  
Be ordyr were peynted on the wal  
And mo than I can make mencion  
For sothly al the mounte of Cickron  
The Venus hath hyr pryncypal dwellynge  
Was fixid on the wal here portreyng  
Wyth al the Joye and al the lustynesse  
Nought was forgeten the porters jaelnesse  
Ne Narcysus the fayre yore agoon  
Ne yet the folye of kynge Salamon  
The enchauntement of medea and hardynesse  
Of Jason I wyll not now expresse  
Ne yet the strengthe of hercules  
The enchauntement of Medea and Circe  
Ne of turnus wyth hys hard fieris corage  
The rycher Cresus captyf in seruage  
Thus may ye se that wysedom ne richesse  
Beaute slepyghte strengthe ne hardynesse  
Ne may wyth Venus holde champartye  
For as she lyst the world may she gye  
So alle thys folk caught were in her laas  
Tyl they for wo ful ofte sayd alas  
Suffyseth thys ensaumple one or two  
And thowgh I coude rekene a thousand mo  
The statue of Venus glorious for to see  
Was naked fletynge in the large see

## The knyghtis tale

And fro the nauyl down al couerd she was  
Wyth walbis grene and bryght as ony glas  
A cyble in her ryght hond hadde she  
And her hede ful semely on to se  
A rose garland fresch and wel smellynge  
A boue her hede douues also flykerynge  
Besorn hyr stood hyr sone cuppido  
Upon hyr schuldres wyngis hadde he tibe  
And blynd he was as it is ofte seen  
A bolbe he huar and arolbes bryght & keen  
Why shold I not eke telle you all  
The porteynyng that was vpon the wall  
Wyth in the tempyl of myghty mars the rede  
Al was peynted the wallis in lengthe & brede  
Lyke to the Escus of the gryssly place  
That hyght the grette tempyl of mars in trace  
In that colde northeren frosty region  
There as mars hath hyr souerayn mansioun  
First on the wal was peyntyd a forest  
In whiche ther dweltyth neyther man ne best  
Wyth knotty & knarry kureyn trees olde  
Of sturbis sharp & hyddous to beholde  
In whiche ran as a rymbyl in a stowle  
As though it a storm were shold breste euery bow  
And downward on an hyl vnder abent  
There stood the tempyl of marce armppotent  
Wrought of al burnyd steel the which p entre  
Was longe and streyght & gasely for to see  
And ther out cam a rage and such a weyse  
That it made al the gatis forto reyse  
The northeron lyght in at the dore shon  
For wyndow on the wal was ther non  
Thurgh whiche men myght ony light dyscerne  
The doris were al of athemaundis eterne  
P clenched ouertylbart and endlonge  
Wyth iren tow forto make it stronge  
Euery pyler the tempyl forto susteyne  
Was tonne greet of yren bryght and stene

## The knyghtis tale

There salbe I first the derk ymagenyng  
Of felony and alle the compassyng  
The cruel Jte reed as ony glede  
The pyke pur 3 and eke the pale drede  
The smyler wyth the knyf vnder the cloke  
The styren brennyng wyth the black smoke  
The treson of the murtheryng in the bed  
The oppyn lverrys wyth woundis al bled  
Contake wyth bloody knyf & sharpe manace  
And ful of chyrryng was the sorow place  
The sleer of hym self yet salbe I there  
Hys herte bloody hath lured al hys chere  
The nayle y dryue in the shode an hyghte  
The colde deeth wyth mouth gappynge vp right  
A myddyl of the tempyl sat myschaunce  
Wyth dyscomforte and sorow contaunce  
Yet salbe I wodenesse salubghyng in hys rage  
Armed compleynt/ outhees & fyres courage  
The carayne in the bussh wyth throte y corue  
A thousand slayn/ & not of qualme y stour  
The tyraunt wyth the praye by force y raft  
The towne destroyed ther was nothyng last  
Yet salbe I brente the shippes hopesteris  
The hunter strangled wyth the wyld beere  
The solbe fetyng the chylde in the cradyl  
The cook y scalded for al hys longe ladyll  
Nought forgetyn was the infortune of marke  
The carter ouer ryden wyth hys olben carte  
Vnder the whele ful wolbe he laye a down  
There were also of markes deuyfion  
The barbour the boucker and the smyth  
That forged sharpe swerdis in the seyth  
And al aboute depeynted in a towre  
Salbe I conquest sittynge in gret honour  
Wyth the sharpe swerde ouer hys hed  
Hangynge be a subtyl twyned thred  
Depeynted was ther the slaughter of Julius  
Of grette Nero and of Anthonius

## The kynghtis tale

Al be it that thykke tyme they were vnborn  
Yet was her deeth peynted ther befor  
We manassunge of marce ryght by fygure  
So was it skildy right by portreture  
As it is depaynted in the sterres aboue  
Who shal be slayn or ellis ded for loue  
Suffyseth on ensampyl in storyes olde  
I may not rekene hem alle though I wolde  
The statue of marce vp on a carre stode  
Armyd and lokyd grym as he were woode  
And ouer hys hed ther shynen two figuris  
Of sterres that ben called in scripturis  
That one puebla hyght that other Fubens  
Thys god of armys was arayd thus  
A wolf ther stode befor hym at hys feet  
Wyth eyen red and of a man he eet  
Wyth subtil pensel was peynted thys story  
In redoubtyng of marce and of hys glory  
Now to the tempyl of dyane the chaste  
As shortly as I can I wyl me haste  
To telle you alle the description  
Depeynted ben the wallis vp and down  
Of huntynge and of shamefaste chastyte  
There salb I holb woful Calistoye  
Whan dyane greuyd was wyth her  
Was turned fro woman to a fere  
And aftyr was she maad the hood sterre  
Thus was it peynted I can say no fere  
Her sone is eke a sterre as men may se  
Eke salbe I dane turned vntyl a tre  
I mene not the godeffe dyane  
But penelus doughter which that highte dane  
Eke salb I atheon an fere y makyd  
For vengeaunce that he salb dyane al nakyd  
I salb holb that houndis haue hym caught  
And frefyn hym for they knelb hym nought  
Yet y peynted was a lytyl furthermore  
Holb athalante huntyd the wyld be

## The knyghtis tale

And mekager and meny other moo  
For whych dyane wroughte hym care & woo  
There salbe I many another wonder stoz  
The whych me lyst not draue in memory  
Thys goddesse on an hert hygh is sete  
Wyth smale houndis al aboute her fete  
And vnderneche her feet she hadde a mone  
We yonge it was and shold wane sone  
In galldy grene her statue clothed was  
Wyth solbe in hond and arolles in caas  
Here open cast she ful solbe adoun  
There plute hath hys derk regioun  
A womman trauelynge was here beforen  
But for her chylde so longe was vnborn  
Ful pytously lucyna gan she calle  
And said help for thou mayst kest of alle  
Wel coude she pynce lyuely that it wroughte  
Wyth meny a foreyn she the hulbis boughte

**O**W hen thys lystis maad & theseng  
That at his grette cost hath awayd thus  
The templeis and the theatre euerydel  
Whan it was doon it likyd hym wonder wel  
But seynte J whyl of thesengs alite  
And speke of palamon and of arate  
The day approchyd of here retourning  
That euerych shold an hundrid knyghtes bring  
The luteylle to darreyn as J you tolde  
And tyl Athens here couenaunt forto holde  
Hath euerych of hem brought an & knyghtes  
Wel y armed for the werre at al ryghtes  
And sikirly ther trolbed many a man  
That neuer sithnes the world began  
As for to speke of knyghthod of her hond  
As fer as god hath made see and lond  
Was of so felbe so nobyl a company  
For euery wyght that loued chyalrye  
And wold his thankys haue a passyng name  
Hath prayde that he myghte be of that game

## The knyghtis tale

And wel was hym that thereto chosen was  
For if ther syl to more so such a mas  
Ye knowe wel that euery lusty knyght  
That loueth paramours & hath hys myght  
Were it in engelond or ellis where  
They wolde hit thankyes wyllen to be there  
To fyght for a lady a benedict  
But were a lusty sight for to se  
And ryght so ferthe they wyth palamon  
Wyth hym ther wente knyghtis many oon  
Some wolde be armed in habergeon  
Some in brest plate and in a lyght gypon  
And some wol haue a pэр of plates large  
And some wolde haue a pryр shelde & targe  
Some wolde be armed on hys leggis wele  
And haue an ax and some a mace of steel  
Eter is no nelbe gyse but it was hold  
Armed were they as I haue told  
Eueryche after hys owen oppynyon  
There mayst thou se compynge wyth palamon  
Figure hym self the grette kyng of trace  
Blak was his berd & manly was his face  
The archis of hys eyen in hys hede  
They gyllden betwixx yelow and red  
And lyke a gryffyn looked he about  
Wyth kempt hris in hys brollys stoute  
Hys lymes grette hys bralyn hard & strong  
His shuldres brade hys armes wūd & long  
And as the gyse was in hys contre  
Ful hygh vpon a chere of gold stood he  
Wyth four whyte bolis in the trays  
In seide of cotte armure ouer hys harnays  
Wyth naylis yelow & bright as ony gold  
He hadde a fere skyn col blak for old  
His longe hris were kempt behynd his back  
As ony rauen fetthir it shoon for blak  
A wrethe of gold arme grette of huge weyght  
Opp on his hed sat ful of stones byght

## The knyghtis tale

Of fyn Rubyes and of fyn diamantes  
Aboute hys chare ther wente alauntis  
Twenty and mo as grette as ony steer  
To hunt atte spoun or ellys at the deer  
And folowedy hym wyth mosel faste y bounde  
Colers of gold and trettis fylde wunde  
An hundrid wordes he hadde in hys wolde  
Armed wel wyth lertes sterne and stolde

**W**yth arate as men in story fynde  
The strong Emetrius the kyng of jnde  
Up on a bay stede y trappid al in steell  
Armed wyth a cloth of gold y dyapred wel  
Cam rydynge lyke the god of armys marce  
Hys cotte armure was of cloth of tarce  
Colchid wyth perles whyt rounde and grette  
Hys sadyl was of brente gold nele y sette  
A mantellet on hys shuldres hangynge  
Wet ful of rubys bryght as fire sparklynge  
His bryght crispe herys like ryngis were combe  
And that was peblow & glytred as the sonne  
Hys nose was hygh hys even bryght cytryne  
Hys swis wunde hys colour was sanguyne  
A felbe fraichis in hys face were spreynt  
Wetlowy peblow & somdeel black y meynt  
And as a spoun he bolpyd aboute faste  
Of xvij yere of age I hym caste  
Hys herdy was wel begonne for to sprynge  
Hys hoys was as a trompe thonderynge  
Up on hys hed he beryd of laurer grene  
A garbond frssh and lusy for to sene  
Upon hys honde he bar for hys dedlyte  
An egle tame as ony lyl wyte  
An E knyghte hadde he wyth hym there  
Al armed saue his hed in alle his gere  
Were rychel y arayed in al maner thyngis  
Trusty wel that erlis dukes and kyngis  
Were gadred in thys nobyl compaignye  
For loue and entere of chualrye

## The knyghtis tale

Aboute thys kyngdome ther ronnen on every part  
Wel many a lame soun and lyart  
And in thys wyse the lordis alle and som  
Weren on the sonday to the cite com  
Aboute prynces & in the towyn a light  
This Theseus thys duke this worthy knyght  
Whan he hadde brought hem in to hys cite  
And ynned hem euerich at hys degre  
He festyng hem and doth so gret labour  
To cse hem and to do hem al honour  
That men wenen that no man wyte  
Of none estat ne coude amende it  
The mynystralle the scruple at the feste  
The grette gyftis to the most and leste  
The ryche aray of Theseus Paleys  
He who sat fyrst ne last by en the deys  
O what ladyes feyrest ben or best daunsyng  
O whiche of them can best daunce or syng  
He who most felynghly speketh of loue  
What halibys sitte on the perche aboue  
What houndis lye in the floore a down  
Of al thys make I no mencion  
But of the effect that thynketh me best  
Now comyth the point & larken yf ye list  
He sonday at nyght or day begyn to spring  
Whan Palamon herde the larkes syng  
Al though it were not day he houre two  
Yet songe the lark & palamon nyght tho  
With hooly herte and wyth an hygh corage  
Is ryfen to wende on hys pylgrymage  
Onto the blyssful Sytherea kempne  
I mene Venus honourable and dygne  
And in her houre he walked forth a pace  
Onto the lystes there her temple was  
And down he knelyth and wyth humble chere  
And wyth hert sore he sayd as ye shul here  
Feyrest of feyre o lady myn Venus  
Doughter to jouns & spouse to blacanus

## The knyghtis tale

That gladdest al the mount of Sytherron  
For that loue that thou haddest to Adon  
Haue pyte on my litter tene smert  
And take myn humble prayer at thy fere  
Alas I haue no langage for to telle  
The effect ne the turment of myn helle  
Myn fere may not myn harmys be lrepe  
I am so sorowful that I can not seye  
But mercy lady bryght that knowest wel  
My thought & seest the harmys that I fele  
Considere thys and relve vp on my sore  
As wysly as I shal for euermore  
Emforthe my myght thy trewe seruicunt to be  
And holde warre lady allway wyth chastyte  
That I make myn auolbe so ye me helpe  
I kepe not of armys for to yelpe  
Ne I aye not to morow for to haue victory  
Ne renoun in thys cas ne beynglorpe  
Of pryse of armys to blolbe vp and down  
But I wold fully haue possession  
Of Emely and dye in thy seruyse  
Fynd thou the manere how and what wyse  
I wete not but yf it may better be  
To haue victory of them or they of me  
So that I haue my lady in myn armys  
For though so be that mars be god of armys  
Your vertu is so grete in heuene aboue  
That yf you lyst I shal haue my loue  
Thy tempyl wol I worschyp euermo  
And on an auter were I ryde or go  
I wyl do sacrifice and fyris bete  
And yf ye wyl not so my lady swete  
Than praye I the to morow wyth a spere  
That arcyte me thorow the herte fere  
Than wete I nat whan I haue lost my lyf  
Though that arcyte wedde her to hys wyf  
Thys is the effect and the ende of my prayer  
Reue me my loue my blyssed lady deere

## The knyghtis tale

Whan that the oryson was don of palamon  
Hys sacrifice he dyd; and; that anon  
Ful petyously wyth alle circumstaunces  
Alle talle I not as nolbe his obseruaunces  
And; al the statue of Venus shoke  
And; made a signe wherby that he toke  
That his prayer acceptyd; was that day  
For though the fygure shoulde delay  
Yet wyse he wel that graūtyd was his sone  
And with glad herte he wente hym home sone  
The thirde hour equal that palamon  
Began to Venus tempyl for to gon

**A**nd; roos the sonne and; by roos Emelye  
And; to the tempyl of dyane gan his  
Her maydes that six with his thider lady  
Ful redely wyth hym the fyre they lady  
Tennence the clothis and; the remenaunt al  
That to the sacryfise longyn shal  
The houses ful of meche as was the gyse  
There lackyd; nought to don his sacryfise  
Smokyng; the tempyl ful of clothis fayr  
Thys Emely wyth herte despayr  
Her body wecsse wyth water in a well  
But how she dyd; there I dar not telle  
But hit be ony thyng; in general  
And; yet it were a game to here it al  
To hym that meneth wel it were no charge  
But it is good; a man be at his large  
Her bright herte was kempt and; entressed al  
And; a crowne of grene oke serpal  
Op on her hed; was set ful fayr and; mete  
Two fyris on the auter gan she bete  
And; dyde her thynges as men may be holde  
In state of Theres and; in lokys olde  
Whan kyndeled was the fyre with petyous chere  
Unto dyane she spak as ye may here  
O chaste goddesse of the wodde grene  
To whome bothe heuene and; erthe & see is sen

## The knyghtis tale

Quene of the regne of pluto derk and? solwe  
Goddesse of maydens that my hert hast knolwe  
ful many a peer and? wotyst what I desyre  
As keep me fro the vengeaunce and? thyn I re  
That atheon aboughte felbly  
Elast goddesse wel wotyst thou that I  
Desyre to be a mayden al my lyf  
Ne neuer wol I be loue ne wyf  
I am thou wotyst yet of thy company  
A mayden and? loue huntynge and? venory  
And? for to walkyn in the wodis wylde  
And? not to be a wyf and? be wyth chyld  
Nought wyl I knolwe companye of man  
Nolw helpe me lady sithnes thou may and? can  
For the thre fourmes that thou hast in the  
And? palamon that hath such loue to me  
And? eke arcyte that loueth me so sore  
Thys grace I pray the wythouten more  
As sende loue and? pees betwix hem tbo  
And? fro me to be alway hert hertis so  
That al hyr hote loue and? al hyr desyre  
And? al hyr kesy turment and? al hyr fyre  
We queynt or turned? in another place  
And? yf so be thou wyl do me no grace  
Or yf my descenye be shapen so  
That I shal nedys haue one of hem tbo  
As sende me hym that most despreth me  
Beholde goddesse of clene chastyte  
The byttr terys that on my chekis falle  
Sythnes thou art a mayde & keeper of vs alle  
My maydenkyd? thou kepe and? wel conserue  
And? whyles I lyue a mayden wyl I the serue  
Tyl fyres brenne vp on the auters clere  
Whyle Emely was thus in hyr prayere  
But sodenly she saib a syghte queynt  
For ryght anon one of the fyres queynt  
And? quykelyd? agayn and? aftyr that anon  
That othyr fyre was queynt and? al agon

## The knyghtis tale

And as it queynt it made a whyselinge  
As don thys wete brondis in her frennyng  
And at the brondis ende out ran anon  
As it were dropis blyd many on  
For whys he so sore agast was Emely  
That she was almost mad and gan to cry  
For she ne wiste what it signyfyed  
But only for feer thus hath she cryed  
And wepte that it was pyte to here  
And therewith al dyane gan appere  
With solwe in hond ryght as an huntress  
And sayd daughter seynt thyn leynesse  
Amonge the goddis an hygh it is affermed  
And by etern worde wryten and confermed  
Thou shalt be weddyd vntyl one of two  
That haue for the so moche care and wo  
But vnto whiche of hem may I not telle  
Fare wel for I may no longer dwelle  
The fyris whiche on myn auter brenne  
Shal the declare or thou go hence  
Thyn auenture of loue as in thys case  
And wryth that word the arolles in the case  
Of the goddesse clatter faste and ryng  
And forth she wente & made a danysshynge  
For whiche thys Emely asenped was  
And sayd what amounteth thys allas  
I put me vnder thy protection  
Dyane and in thy dysposicion  
And home she goth anon the next day  
Thys is the effect there is nomoe to say  
In the next houre of mornynge after thys  
**A**rcyte vnto the tempyl walke is  
Of spers mornynge to do his sacryfys  
With al the rightis of his paynem wif  
Wyth ppyous lerte and hygh deuocion  
Ryght thus to mornynge he sayd thys oryson  
O strong god that in the regnes colde  
Of traie honoured art and lord I holde

## The knyghtis tale

And hast in euery regne and euery bond  
Of armys al the bydyl in thy hond  
And hem fortunest as the lyst best deuyse  
Accepte of me my pytous sacryfise  
Yf so be that my thought may deserue  
And that my myght be worthy to serue  
Thy godhede that I may be one of thyne  
Than prey I the relbe on my pyne  
For that pyne and that hote fyre  
In whiche thou whylom brendyst for desyre  
Whan that thou vledyst the beaute  
Of feyre yonge fressh Venus fre  
And haddest hyr in thy armys at thy wyll  
And though the onys a tyme mys fyll  
Whan Blacanus had caught the in hys laas  
And fond the lyggynge be hys wyf alas  
For thykke sorow that was in thy hert  
Haue colthe as wel vp on my perys smert  
I am yonge and vnkonnynge as thou wost  
And as I tolde wyth loue offendyd most  
Than euer was ony luyes creature  
For sike that doth me alle, this wo endure  
He wretchyth neuer wether I synke or flete  
And wel I woot or she me mercy sette  
I muste wyth strengthe wyne here in þe place  
And wel I wote wythout helpe and grace  
Of the may not my strengthe a dayle  
Than helpe me lord to morow in my batayle  
For that fyre that whylom brent the  
As wel as that fyre now frenneth me  
And do that I to morow haue the victory  
My the trauayl and thyng be the glory  
Thy souereyn temple wil I most honoure  
Of ony place alwey and most laboure  
In thy plesaunce and in thy wastis stronge  
And in thy temple I wil my lamer songe  
And alle the armys of my compaignie  
And euermore vntyl that daye I dye

## The knyghtis tale

Etterne fyre I wol befor the fynde  
And eke to thyss auolue I wyl me bynde  
My herde my hert that hangyth longe adoun  
That neuer yet felt offensioun  
Of rasour ne of sere I wyl the prue  
And be thy trewe seruaunt whil I lue  
Now lord haue wolthe þu on my sorowis fore  
Peue me the bydory I am nomore  
The prayer stynt of arete the stronge  
The ryngis that on the tempyl dore hong  
And eke the dores clatred so faste  
Of whiche arete somwhat hym agaste  
The fyris brent þuon the auters bryght  
That it gan al the tempyl for to lyght  
A softe smel anon the ground þu pas  
And arete anon his hond þu gaf  
And more entente in to the fyre caste  
With othe rytes moo and at the laste  
The statue of mars legan his hauberk ryng  
And wyth that solyn he serde a murmurynge  
ful solbe and dym and sayd thus bydory  
for whiche he pas to mars honour and glory  
And thus wyth ioye and hope wel to fare  
Arete anon to his iune is fare  
As fayn as folbe is of the bryght sonne  
And ryght anon such serf is there begonne  
for that grauntynge in heuene aboue  
Betwix Venus goddesse of loue  
And mars the sterne godd armyppotent  
That Jupiter was besy it to stynte  
Tyl that the pale Saturnus the colde  
That knew so many of auenturis olde  
fonde in his olde experyence and art  
That he ful sone hath plesed euery part  
As soth is sayd eld hath gret auantage  
In eld is bothe wysedom and vsage  
Men may the old out renne but not out rede  
Saturne anon to stynte serf and drede

## The knyghtis tale

Al be it that it is ayens hys kynde  
Of al thys scrif he gan remedies fynde  
My dere doughter Venus quod Saturne  
My cours that hath so lye for to turne  
Hath more wolber than lode ony man  
Myn is the drenchyng on the see so wan  
Myn is the pryson in the derke cote  
Myn is the stragelyng & hangyng by þe throte  
The murmur and the chors rekyng  
The grownyng and the pryue enpysonyng  
I do vengeaunce and pleyne correction  
Whyles I dwelle in the signe of the lyon  
Myn is the tyne of the hygh halles  
The fallyng of the touris and the walles  
Up on the mynour or the carpenter  
I stough Sampson shakynge the pylar  
And myne ten the maladyes colde  
The derke treson and the castis olde  
My lokyng is the fader of pestelence  
Now wepe nomore I shal don dyspygence  
That palamon that is thyne olven knyght  
Shal haue hys lady as thou hym keshyght  
And Mars shal kepe his knyght yet natheles  
Welwysse you ther muste be somtyme wees  
Al be ye not of one complexion  
That causith alday suche dyspycion  
I am thyne al redy at thy lyl  
Wepe now nomore I lyl thy luste fulfyl  
Now wol I seynt of the goddes aboue  
Of mars and Venus goddesse of lue  
And telle you al playnly as I can  
The grete effect for whiche I began

**O** Yet was the feste in athenes that day  
And eke the lusty soun of that may  
Made euery wight to be in such plesaunce  
That al that monday iuste they and daunce  
And spenden it in Venus hygh seruyse  
But by cause that they sholden aryse

## The knyghtis tale

Erly for to see the grette syght  
Onto her reste wente they at nyght  
And on the morow when day gan sprynge  
Of hors and noyse harnes and claterynge  
Ther was in hostelryes alle aboute  
And to the paleys wode ther many a route  
And lordys by on stedys and palfreys  
There mayst thou se deupynge of harnes  
So uncolthe and so ryche & brought so wel  
Of goldsmithys of breyde & of stel  
The sheldys bryght & steris and trappours  
Gold helmen helmes halberkis & cotte armours  
Lordes in paramendis on her coursers  
Knyghtes of revenue and eke squyers  
Maylynge the speris and helmes tokelynge  
Gyrdynge of sheldys wyth leyners lasynge  
Ther as ned is they were nothyng joyl  
The fomy stedes on the goldyn brydyl  
Gnalyng and faste the armours also  
Wyth fyle and hamer prykyng to and fro  
Yemen on fote and comyn many on  
Wyth spert staves thyeke as they may gon  
Pypis trompis naconers and clacions  
That in the bataylle shollen bloody solons  
The paleys ful of peple by and down  
Here thre there ten holdynge her questoun  
Demynge of the theban knyghtis twe  
Some sayd thus some sayd it shal be so  
Some holde wyth hym wyth the black berd  
Some wyth the lullid some wyth þe thicke berd  
Some sayd he lokedy greyn & he wolde fyght  
He hath a sparth of xx wounde of wyght  
Thus was the halle ful of deupynge  
Longe after that the sonne gan to sprynge  
The grette thesens that of hys sleep alwakedy  
Wyth mynstralcye & noyse that was makedy  
Held yet the chambyr of hys paleys ryche  
Tyl that the theban knyghtis bothe y lyche

## The knyghtis tale

Honoured were and in to the paleys fet  
Duke Theseus is at the Wyndolwe set  
Araudy ryght as he were a god in trone  
The peple preech thyderward ful sone  
Hym forth seen and doon hygh reuerence  
And eke to harkyn his best and his sentence  
An hrolde on a skaffold made an O  
Eyl alle the noyse of the peple was do  
And whan he salbe the peple of noyse al styl  
Thus stilde he the myghty dukes wyll  
The lord hath of his hygh dyscrecion  
Considered that it were destruction  
To gentyl blood to fyghtyn in this wyse  
Of mortal lutanke noly in this emprise  
Wherefore to shapen that they shold not dye  
He wyl his hys putres modysye  
Noman therfore on payne of losse of lyf  
No maner shot/ne pollax/ne shyt knyf  
In the lystis sende or thedyr lunge  
He shote swerd forth to strike with point lunge  
No noman ne dralbe ne bere it he his syde  
No noman shal into his felaw ryde  
But one cours wuth a sharp y grounde spere  
Froynyng yf hym lyse on fote hym self to bere  
And he that is at myschepes shal he take  
And not slayn/ but he brought to the stake  
That shal he ordeyned on eyther syde  
But thyder he shal by force and there abyde  
And yf so falle the cheseryn he take  
On eyther syde or ellis sleth his make  
No lenger shal the turneyng laste  
God speke you goth forth and lye on faste  
Wuth longe swerdis & maces fyght your fyl  
Goth noly your lye this is the lordis wyl  
The boye of peple tolchyd the fluen  
So wolde cryde they wuth mery steuen  
God saue such a lord that is so good  
He wylneth no destruction of blood

## The knyghtis tale

Up goth the trumpis and the melodye  
And to the lystis ridyth thys compaignye  
By ordinaunce thourgh out the cyt large  
Hangyd wpyth cloth of gold & not wpyth sarge  
Ful lyke a lord thys nobyl duke gan ryde  
Thyse tibo thelmes vp on eyther syde  
And aftyr wood the quene and Emelye  
And aftyr that another compaignye  
Of one and other aftyr her degre  
And thus they passe thurgh the cyt  
And to the lystes come they betyme  
Hyt nas not of the day yet fully pryme  
Whan set was Theseus ryche on hygh  
Iolita the quene and Emelye  
And other ladies in degrees abowte  
Wnto the setes preceith al the rowte  
And westward thurgh the pates vnder marte  
Arate & eke the hundred of hys parte  
Wpyth finer reed is entred ryght anon  
And in that selue moment Palamon  
Is vnder Venus estelward in that place  
Wpyth finer whyte and hardy chere of face  
In al the world to seke vp and down  
So euene wpythout ony variacion  
Eke nere such compaignes tibeie  
For ther was non so wysse that coude seie  
That ony hadde of other auantage  
Of worthynesse ne estate ne of age  
So euene were they chosen for to gesse  
And in tibo rences feyre they hem dresse  
And when that her names red were euerichon  
That in her noumbre gyle were ther noon  
Tho were the patis shynt and cryde was loude  
Do nolb pour deuer yong knyghtys proude  
The heroldes lefte her prysyng vp & down  
Nolb ryngyn trompis blode and clarioun  
Eke is nomore to seyn but est and west  
In goth the spere ful sadly in the west

## The knyghtis tale

In goth the sharpe spore in to the syde  
The r seen men who can iuste and who can ryde  
The shpyeryn shaftys vp on skeldys thyslike  
He feltyth thorow the herte spon the pryke  
Wp spryngyng sporis twenty foot on hygh  
Out gon the sylverdys as the siluer bryght  
The helmes they to helven and to shrede  
Out brest the blood wyth sterne stremys rede  
Wyth myghty maces the bones they to brest  
He thorow the thickest of þe throng gan threst  
The stomakelyn seedis strong & down goth alle  
He collyth vnder foot as doth a halle  
He fornyeth on hys feet wyth hys trunchon  
And he hurteth wyth hys hors adoun  
He thorow the body is hurt and sithnes take  
Magede hys heed and brought to the stake  
As forwarde was ryght there he muste abyde  
Another led is on that other syde  
And somtyme doth hem Theseus to reste  
Hem forth to refresche and drynke yf theym lyst  
ful ofte a day haue the Theseus two  
To gyder y met and brought eyther two  
Confortid with eche other of hem tweye  
There is no tyger in the vale of galegopseye  
When that her whelpe is stole when it is lyte  
So cruel on the hunte as is arcyte  
For iekous herte vpon thys palamon  
He in helmarke ther nys so fel spoun  
That huntyd is or for angry wood  
He of hys pray desirith so the blood  
As palamon to sle hys foo arcyte  
The iekous strokis on hys helmys byte  
Out renneth blood on bothe her sydes rede  
Som tyme an ende ther is of euery dede  
For or the sonne vnto reste wente  
The stronge kyng Emetrius gan hent  
Thys palamon as he fought wyth arcyte  
And made hys sylver depe in hys flesch byte

## The knyghtis tale

And by the force of twenty was he take  
Conquered and dralbe to the stake  
And in the rescous of thys palamon  
The strong knyght Egeurges is born a down  
And knyght Emetrius for al hys strengthe  
Is born out of hys sadyl a siberdis lengthe  
So hytte hym palamon or he were take  
But al for nought he was brought to þe stake  
Hys hardy hert ne myght hym helpe nought  
He muste abyde when he was caught  
By force and eke by compassioun  
Who soroweth nold but woful palamon  
That muste nomore go any to fyghe  
And when that Theseus hadde seyn that spght  
Unto the folke that foughten thus echone  
He cryde than ho/nomore for it is done  
I wyl be trewe iuge and not party  
Arcyte of theses shal haue Emely  
That by hys fortune hath her feyr y bonne  
Anon ther is a noyse of peple begonne  
For joye of thys so loude and hygh wyth al  
That it semed that the lystis sholde fal

**W**hat can nold fayre Venus done aboue  
What saith she what doth þe quene of loue  
But wepyth so for wantynge of her wyl  
Tyl that her tere in the lystis fyl  
She sayd I am ashamed donlles  
Saturne sayd daughter holde thy pees  
Mars hath hys wyl the knyght hath hys lone  
And by my frend thou shalt be esed some  
The trompettis wyth the solde mynstralsie  
The secolldes that ful solde yelle and crye  
Wene in her joye for the weel of dene arcyte  
But lokeneth me e feynt noyse alyte  
Whycher a myrakil there be fyl anone  
Thys ferre arcyte hath hys helme of done  
And on a courser forth shalbe hys face  
He pryked endong the large place

## The knyghtis tale

Lo kyngz vplwardz vp on thys Emelye  
Andz sike agayn hym cast a frendly eye  
Andz was al in hys chere as in hys hert  
Out of the groundz a fyre infernal stert  
From pluto sent at the request of saturne  
For wyth hys hors for feer gan to turne  
Andz lepte a spede andz foundryd as he lepte  
Andz or that arcyte may take kepe  
He pyght hym on the pomel of hys hedz  
That in the place he lay as he were dedz  
Hys breste to brosten wyth hys sadyl bolbe  
As black he lay as ony cole or colbe  
So was the bloody ronne in hys face  
Anon he was born out of the place  
Wyth herte sore to Theseus paleys  
Tho was he carryn out of hys harnays  
Andz in a bed brought ful seyre andz blyue  
For he was yet in memory andz alpyue  
Andz al they crynge aftyr Emelye  
Duke Theseus wyth al hys compaignye  
So come home to Athenes hys cyte  
With alle blys andz grete solempnyte  
Al be it that thys auenture was falle  
He nolde not dyscomforte hym alle  
Men sayd eke that arcyte shold not dye  
He shold be helyd of hys mala dye  
Andz of another thyng they were feyn  
That of hym alle ther was none sleyn  
Alle were they sore hurt andz namely one  
That wyth a spere was thrypped the brestbone  
The othre woundis andz the broke armes  
Some hadde saluyes and some hidden charmes  
Fermacyes of herbes andz eke sane  
They dronkyn for they hold her spues hane  
For wyth hys nobyl duke as he wel can  
Comforteth andz honourd euery man  
Andz made well alle the long nyght  
Wnto the straunge lordys as was ryght

## The knyghtis tale

Ne there was holden no dyscomfytynge  
But as a Justes or a tourneyenge  
For ther was holden no dyscomfyture  
For fayllynge nys but auenture  
Ne to be ladd by force vnto the stake  
On pelodyn and by the kynghtis take  
One persone allone wyth oute mo  
And harped forth by arme foot and to  
And eke his stede dyuen forth wyth staups  
Wyth footmen bothe yemen and eke knaups  
Hyt nas yretted hym no bylonye  
Ther may noman clepe it colbardrye  
For wyche anon duke Theseus let aryse  
To styntyn alle rancour and enuye  
The degre as wel in o spede as in other  
And cythyr side lyke as othyr brother  
And gaf hem gyftyes aftyr her degre  
And fully held a feste dayes thre  
And conueyed the kynges worthily  
Out of his towyn a journey largely  
And home wente euery man the right way  
Ther was no more but farwel haue good day

**O**f this katapyl I wyll nomore endyte  
But speke of palamon and of arcyte  
Whelk wyth the brest of arcyte and the fore  
Enaceryth at his hert ay more and more  
The chastyte blod for ony lechecraft  
Coruptyth and in his hylde is last  
That neyther beynne bloody ne ventusynge  
Ne drynke of herbis may be his helppynge  
The vertu expulsiue of anymall  
fro that vertu y cleppyd naturall  
He may the benygn boyde ne expelle  
The pppis of his longis gan to swelle  
And euery laart in his brest a doun  
Is stent wyth benyme and corrupcioun  
Whym garyeth nothyng for to gete his lyf  
Compte vplward and dounward sayatp

## The knyghtis tale

Al is to brosten thylke regyon  
Nature hath in hym no domynacion  
And certaynly there nature wol not birche  
Fare wel plesyr go here the man to chyrche  
Thys is al and som arcyte muste dye  
For whyle he sendyth astyr Emelye  
And palamon that was hys cosyn dere  
Than sayd he thus as ye shul astyr here  
Not may the woful spirit in my hert  
Declare a poynt of al my sorowys smert  
To you my lady that I loue most  
But ke quethe the scruple of my gost  
To polb abouen euery creature  
Synnes that my lyf may no lenger dure  
Alas the woo alas the payne stronge  
That I for you haue suffrid and so longe  
Alas the deth/ Alas my Emelye  
Alas the departynge of our compaignye  
Alas my hertis quene/ alas my wyf  
My hertis lady ender of my lyf  
What is this world? what axith men to haue  
Nold wyth hys loue nold cold in hys graue  
Alone wythouten ony compaignye  
Fare wel my swete foo my Emelye  
And soft take me in your armes threwe  
For the loue of god? & herknyth what I seye  
I haue lere wyth my cosyn palamon  
Had stryf and rancour many aday agoon  
For loue of you/ and of my iehelwyse  
And iuppter so wyfly my soule gre  
To speken of a seruaunt properly  
Wyth circumstaunces alle truly  
That is to sayn trouth honour & knyghthode  
Wysdom humbleste estate and hys kynde  
Freedom and alle that longeth to that arte  
So iuppter haue of my solde parte  
As in thys world? right nold knowe I non  
So worthy to be loued? as palamon

## The knyght's tale

That serueth you and wyll do al hye lye  
And yf that euer ye shul be a wyf  
Forgetith not palamon the gentyl man  
And wyth that word hye speke fayle gan  
For fro hye feet vnto hye brest was come  
The colde of deeth that hath hym ouercome  
And yet more ouer for in hye armes thus  
The vntal strengthe is lost and al ago  
Only the intellectis withouten more  
That dwellyth in hye herte speke and fore  
Can fayle whan the herte felth deeth  
Dusshyd hye eyen to and fayleth hye brest  
But on hye lady yet caste he hye eye  
Hye laste word was mercy Emelye  
Hye spirit chaunged the hous and wente there  
As I can neuer I can not telle where  
There yf synte I am not deuynter  
Of soules fynde I not in thys regystrer  
Ne me lyste the oppynions to tell  
Of the though y they wryten where they dwell  
Arre it is cold there mars hye soule gye  
Now wyll I speke forth of Emelye  
Shryfte Emelye and holl leth palamon  
And I hysus hye suser toke anon  
Sibolnyng and hure hye fro the coris alway  
What helppeth it to tary forth the day  
To telle how she wepte bothe eue and morow  
For in such cas wommen haue such sorow  
Whan that her husbandis be fro hem ago  
That for the more part they sorowen so  
Or ellis falle in such a maladye  
That at the laste certaynly they dye  
Insynyt ben the sorowys and the teris  
Of olde folk and folk of tendre yeres  
In al the town for deeth of thys theban  
For hym ther wepyth bothe chylde and man  
So greet wepyng was ther non certayn  
Whan Ector was brought al fresh I slayn

## The knyghtis tale

To trope alas the pyte that was there  
Cratchinge of chekes rentynge eke of herte  
Why woldest thou be dede thys bymnen axe  
Ande hadde gold ynough ande Emelye  
No man myght glade thesūs  
Sawynge hys olde fader egeus  
That knewe thys worldis transmutacion  
As he hadde seen it chaunge vp ande down  
Joye after woo ande woo after gladnesse  
Ande shalbe hym ensauple ande liknesse  
Knyght as ther dede neuer man quode he  
That he ne spuede in erthe in some degre  
Knyght so ther spuede neuer man he seide  
In al this world that some tyme he ne dede  
Thys world is but a thowrb fare ful of wo  
Ande we be pylgryms passynge to ande fro  
Deth is an ende of euery worldis soire  
Ande ouer al thys yet sayde he mykyl more  
To this effect ful wysely to enforce  
The peple that they sholden hem recomforce  
Duke Theseus wyth al hys besy cure  
Caste noli vbiere that the sepulture  
Of goody arete may best y makyd be  
Ande eke most honourable in hys degre  
Ande at the last he took conclusion  
That there as fyrst arete ande Palamon  
Hadden for loue the bataylle hem betwene  
That in that selue groue swete ande green  
There as he hadde hys amorous desyres  
Hys complainyng ande for loue hys hote fyres  
He wold make a fyre in whiche the offic  
Funeral he myght fully accomplishe  
Ande comandede anon to hacke ande to helpe  
The olde olde ande ley hem on a rebe  
In culpyngs wel arayd for to brenne  
Hys offycers wyth swyft feet they renne  
Ande ryden anon at hys comaundement  
Ande after thys thesūs hath sent

## The knyghtis tale

Aftr a fere ande he it ouer sprade  
Wyth clothys of gold the rycheſt that he had  
Ande of the ſame ſute he clothyd arcyte  
Op on hys hondys hys glouys whyte  
Ande on hys hed a crowne of ſaluer grene  
Ande in hys hond a ſwerd ful bryght & kene  
He layde hym lare the bylage on the fere  
The wyth he wepte that pyte was to fere  
Ande for the pepyl ſhold ſe hym alle  
Whan it was day he brought hym in the halle  
That wote of the appynge ande the ſolyn  
Tho cam thys woeful thelun Palamoun  
Wyth ſtorend berd ande ragged aſhy hris  
In clothis blaſt droppede al wyth teris  
Ande paſſynge other of wepyng Emelye  
The reſfulleſt of alle the compaignye  
Ande mas muche as the ſcayſe ſhuld be  
The more nobyl ande kyche in hys degre  
Duke Theſeus leet thre ſtedis forth brynge  
That trappyd were in ſteel al glytarynge  
Ande couered wyth the armys of arcyte  
Ande eke by on the ſtedys grete ande whyte  
The ſatyrn folk of whyche one hure hys ſheld  
Another a ſpere vpon hys ſholdres held  
The thyrde hure wyth hym hys bolbe turkeys  
Of brend gold was the mas ande the harnays  
Ande ryden forth a paas wyth ſorowful chere  
Toward the groue as ye ſhul aftr fere  
The nobleſt of the grekes that there were  
Vpon theyr lances carpen the fere  
Wyth ſlak paas ande open rede ande weete  
Thorow out the cyte by the mayſter ſtrete  
That ſpred was al wyth blaſt & wonder hys  
Kyght of the ſame is the ſtrete y lrye  
Op on the ryght hond wente olde Egeus  
Ande on that othyr ſyd duke Theſeus  
Wyth beſſeis of gold in hys hond ful fyne  
Ande ful of hony mylk blood ande wyne

## The knyghtis tale

The Palamon with ful greet compaignye  
 And after that cam woful Emelye  
 With fyre in hond as was that tyme the gyse  
 To do the offyce of the funeral scrupse  
 Hygh labour and ful greet appaerlynge  
 Was at the scrupse of that fyre makynge  
 That with his grene top the heuen raughte  
 And twety fadom of brede þe armys straughte  
 This is to saye the wolues were so broode  
 Of seralbe fyre was layd meny a boode  
 But hold the fyre was made vp an heryghte  
 Ne eke the names hold the trees heryghte  
 As ook fere/ birch/ asch/ alder holm popler  
 Mapil thorn bech aspe box chesteyn, lynd laurer  
 Wyth/ elme/ plane/ basil and whypulstre  
 Hold they were fellid shal not be told for me  
 Ne hold the goddis rennyng vp and down  
 Discretyd of their habytacioun  
 In whiche they woned in wete and pees  
 Nymphes faunes and a madrides  
 Ne hold the festis and the bryddes alle  
 Fledde for fear whan the wode gan falle  
 Ne hold the ground agast was of the lyght  
 That was not wont to se the sonne bryght  
 Ne hold the fyre was colchyd first with stre  
 And than with drye stickys chowen on thre  
 And than with grene wode and sperry  
 And than with cloth of gold and with perry  
 And garlandis hangynge with many a flour  
 The myrrour the entree with swete odour  
 Ne hold arcyte lay among al thys  
 Ne what rycheesse abowte hys body ther is  
 Ne hold that Emelye as was the gyse  
 Put in the fyre of funeral scrupse  
 Ne hold she swolned whan made was þe fyre  
 Ne what she spak ne what was her desyre  
 Ne what jellous men in to the fyre caste  
 Whan that the fyre was greet & brende faste

## The knyghtis tale

He hold some caste his shilde & some his spere  
And of his vestimentis whiche that they were  
And cuppis ful of mylk wyne and blood  
In to the fyre that brent as it were wood  
He hold the grekes wyth an huge rout  
Ther espyden al the fyre about  
Up on þe lyft hond wyth an hygh sholtyng  
And thurys wyth hit speris clateryng  
And thurys hold the ladies gan crye  
He hold that led was homeward Emelye  
He hold arcyte is brent to assen cold  
He hold the lych wakys were y hold  
That ylle nyght ne hold the grekes pleye  
The wake pleyes ne kepe I not to sepe  
Which wastelith best naked with oyl anoynt  
He hold that sure hym best at the poynt  
I wyl not telle al hold they goon  
Home to Athenes wher the pley is don  
But shortly to the poynt than wol I wende  
And make of my long tale an ende

**B**y proces & by lengthe of certeyn yeris  
Al stynt is the mornyng & the chris  
Of grekes by one general assent

Than semyth me ther was a parlement  
At Athenes upon a certeyn poynt and caas  
And among the which poyntis spokyn was  
To haue wyth certeyn contrees alpaunce  
And haue fully of thesins okeyssaunce  
For whiche this nobyl Theseus anon  
Let sende after gentyl Palamon  
Wyllyst of hym what was the cause and why  
But in his blake clothis sorowfully  
He cam at his comaundement an hye  
Tho sent thesirus for Emelye  
Whan they were set & hys was al the place  
And Theseus abyden hit a space  
Or ony word cam from his wyse breste  
His eyen sette he there as hym lyst

## The knyghtis tale

And wyth a sad bysage he sigth styll  
And after that ryght thus he said his wyll  
The fyrst mouer of the cause aboue  
Whan he fyrst made the fayre cheyne of loue  
Gret was the effect & hygh was hys entent  
Wel wyste he why & what ther of he ment  
For wyth that fayr cheyne of loue he bond  
The fyr the eyr the water and the lond  
In certeyn bondis that may not fle  
The same pryncce and that mouer quod he  
Hath stablissed in this wretchid world adoun  
Certeyn dayes and duracioun  
To all that is engendrid in this place  
Quer the whyche day they molb not pace  
Al molbe they yet tho dayes abygge  
The nedpth non auctorite to legge  
For it is proued by experyence  
But that me lyse to declare my sentence  
Than may wel men by this ordre dyscerne  
That thylke mouer stabyl is and eterne  
Wel may men knolwe but it be a fool  
That euery party is derpyed fro hys scol  
For nature hath not take hys begynnynge  
Of one part or of a cantel of a thyng  
But of a thyng that parfygth is and stable  
Descendynge so tyl it be corrupabyll  
And therefore for hys wyse purueaunce  
He hath so wel be set hys ordernaunce  
That spere of thyng and progressions  
Sholden endure by successions  
And nought etern wythoute ony lye  
This mayst thou vnderstonde and se at eye  
To the ook that hath so longe a noryschyng  
Fro the tyme that it first gynneth to sprynge  
And hath so longe lyf as ye may se  
Yet at the laste wastid is the tre  
Considereth eke how that the hardy stoon  
Under our feet on which we trede and go on

## The knyghtis tale

Yet wastyth it as it lyeth by the wey  
The broode ryuer somtyme weythy drey  
The greet coloures se the wane and wende  
Than ye se that al thyng hath an ende  
Of man of womman se the wel also  
That nedis in one of thysse termys thre  
Thys is to save in yongthe or ellis in age  
He moot be ded the kyng as shal a page  
Some in hys bed some in the depe see  
Some in the large feld as men may se  
Eke helpyth nought alle gon that ilke weye  
Than may I say al thyng mot nedes deye  
What makyth thys but Jupiter the kyng  
That is prync and cause of al thyng  
Conuertynge alle into hys propre wyll  
For whiche it is derpyed soth to tel  
And here agayns no creature alyue  
Of no degre auayleth for to serue  
Than is it wysdom as thynketh me  
To make vertu of necessity  
And take it wel that we may not eschewe  
And namely that to be alle is due  
And who so grutchyth ought he doth folwe  
And rebel is to hym that al may geve  
And certeynly a man hath most honour  
To open in his most excellent flour  
Whan he is lyk of his good name  
Than hath he do hys frend ne hym no shame  
And gladder ought his frend he of hys deeth  
Whan wyth honour so by yolden is hys breth  
Than whan hys name appallid is for age  
For alle forgotten is than hys basselage  
Than is hit best as for a worthy fame  
To open whan a man is best of name  
The contrary for al thys is wyllfulnesse  
Why grutch the why true the feynnesse  
That good arate of cheualre the flour  
Departid is wyth duect and honour

## The knyghtis tale

Out of the folble pryson of thys lyf  
Why gautehyd? hys cosyn and? hys wyf  
Of hys welkure that boueth hym so weel  
Can he hem thank? nay god? woot neuer a deel  
That to the hys soule and? eke hem offende  
And? yet they molbe for lustys not amende  
What may I conclude of thys longe serpy  
But astyr wo I rede be to be mery  
And? thanke juppyter of al hys grace  
And? er he departen from thys place  
I rede that he make of sorowys tibo  
O parfat joye lastyng euer mo  
And? loketh nold wher most sorow is ynn  
There wyl I fyrst amende and? begynne  
Suspect auod? be thys is my ful assent  
Wyth al the aynse of my parlement  
That gentyl palamon pour olben knyght  
That serueth you wyth firt and? myght  
And? euer hath do syn pe fyrst hym knelb  
That pe schul of your grace on hym welb  
And? take hym for husbond? and? for lord?  
Lene me pour hond? for thys is our accord?  
Let see nold of your wommanly pyte  
He is a kyngis brother sone parde  
And? though he were a poure knelb  
Syn he hath serued? you so meny a peer  
And? fnde for you so gret aduersyte  
It mot be consydered? leupth me  
For gentyl mercy ought to passe ryght  
Than sayd? he thus to palamon the knyght  
I trow ther nedrth lytyl sermonyng  
To make you assent to thys thyng  
Come? her & takyth pour lady by the honde  
And? thus of hem to the was made the bonde  
That hacht matrimony or maryage  
By al the counseyl of the baronage  
And? thus wyth al blis and? melodye  
Hath palamon wedded? Emelye

## The Mylleres prologe

And god that al this world hath brought  
Sente hym his laue that he dere had bought  
For noli is palamon in alle wele  
Lynunge in this in pykes and in hile  
And Emely hym loueth so tenderly  
And he hire scriueth agayn so gentylly  
That ther was no wordy hem betwene  
Of Ihesuspe or of any othyr tene  
Thus endyth palamon and Emelye  
And god saue alle this compaignye

Here endyth the knyghtys tale :

And here begynneth the Mylleres prologe

**W**han þe knyght had thus his tale told  
In al the compaignye nas ther peng ne old  
That he ne sayd it was a nobyl story

And worthy to be draue in memory  
And namely the gentylis eueracyon  
Our host wolgh and swoor so mot I goon  
This goth aright vnkelyd is the male  
Let se noli who shal telle another tale  
For treuly the game is wel begonne  
Noli telle ye syr monk yf that ye konne  
Som what to quyte the knyght his tale  
The Myllward that fordrunkyn was al pale  
To that vnnethys vp on his hys he sat  
He nolde auale nother good ne hat  
He abyde noman for his curtesye  
But in pylatis boys he gan crie  
And swoor by armys blood and by knyght  
I can a nobyl tale for the nonys  
With which I wol noli quyte þe knyghts tale  
Our host saith that he was dronke of ale  
And sayd abyde Robyn leue brothyr  
Sum bettyr man shal telle fyrst another

## The Myllers prologe

Ahyde and let vs werke thyrftely  
 Wher cokkis soule quod he that nyl not I  
 For I wyl speke or ellis go my wey  
 Our host answerd tel on a deuyl wey  
 Thou art a fool thy wytt is ouercome  
 Noll herkeneth quod the myllere alle & some  
 But fyrst I make a protestaoun  
 That I am dronke I knolbe by myoun  
 And therefore yf I aught mys speke or say  
 Wytt it the ale of suthwerk I you pray  
 For I wol telle a legende and a lyf  
 Both of a carpenter and of hys wyf  
 Holb that a clerk hath set the bryghtis mye  
 The true answerd and sayd stynt thy clappe  
 Let he thy selbdy dronkyn karbotte  
 Wytt is a synne and eke greet folye  
 To appeer ony man or hym & fame  
 And eke bynge wyys in such a name  
 Thou mayst ynolbgh of othyr thyngis sayn  
 This dronkyn myllward spak ful sone agayn  
 And sayd O leue brothyr Of wolde  
 Why hath no wyf he is no cokcolde  
 But I say not therfor that thou art one  
 Ther ben gode wyys many on  
 Why art thou angry wyth my tale noll  
 I haue a wyf parde as wel as tholl  
 Yet no' de I not for the oger in my ploll  
 Talk vpon me more than ynoll  
 As deme of my self that I were one  
 I wol beleue wel that I am none  
 An husbond shold not be inquisytyf  
 Of goddis pryncipe ne of hys wyf  
 So he may fynde goddis fuson there  
 Of the remenaunt nedyth not to enquire  
 What shold I more say but thys Myllere  
 He nolde hys word for noman forlere  
 But told hys chortis tale in hys manere  
 Me at thynketh that I shal reherce it here

## The Mylleres prologe

And therefore euery gentyl myght I pray  
Demeth not for goddis loue that I say  
Of euyl entent but that I most reherce  
Here taks al be they better or lwerce  
Or ellis falsen some of my matere  
And therefore lwh so lystyth not to lere  
Turne ouer the leef and ches another tale  
For he shal fynde ynolue bothe grette and smale  
Of hystorial thyngz that toldeyth gentylnesse  
And eke moralyte and holynesse  
Blameth not me yf that ye chese anys  
The Myllere is a chole ye knolw wel thys  
So is the reue and eke other mo  
And harbottepe they tolde bothe tbo  
Aupsyth you and put me out of blame  
And eke men shul not make ernest of game

Here begynneth the mylleres tale



## The Mylleres tale

**W**ythom ther was dwellyng in Ouenforde  
 A ryche gnos that gestis hadde to boorde  
 And of hys craft was he a carpenter  
 With hym ther was dwellyng a pour scolar  
 Hadde lernyd art but al hys fantasye  
 Was turnyd to lerne astrologye  
 And coude a certayn of conclusions  
 To demyn by interrogacions  
 If that men asked hym certayn houres  
 Whether they shold haue drought or shoures  
 Or yf that men asked hym what shold befall  
 Of euery thyng I may no rekene alle  
 This clerk was clepyd hende Nicholas  
 Of dern loue he couthe and of solas  
 And ther to he was sly and ful pryue  
 And lyk a mayden meke for to se  
 A chambyr hadde he in that hostelrye  
 Alone wythout ony compaignye  
 Ful feruently y dyght wyth hys sote  
 And he hym self was swete as is the rote  
 Of lycorix or of ony Etebwale  
 Hys almegeste hys lokys grete and smale  
 Hys astrologye/longynge for hys art  
 Hys albyrmy stones lay feyre a part  
 On stekys coldehyd at hys beddis hed  
 Hys presse ycouered wyth a foldynge reed  
 And al aboue ther lay a gay salbrye  
 On wyche he made a nyghtis melodye  
 So swete ly that al the chambyr ronge  
 And angelus ad Virginem he songe  
 And aftyr that he songe the kyngis note  
 Ful often blyssyd was hys mery throte  
 And this swete clerk hys tyme spent  
 Aftyr hys frendes fyndynge & hys rent  
 This carpenter hadde weddyd welbe a wyf  
 Whiche that he louyd more than hys lyf  
 Of ydisch yere he was of age  
 Helous he was & held hys narow in cage

## The Myllers tale

For she was wyld and yonge & she was olde  
And demed hym self lyk to be a cokelbolde  
He knew not Cato for his wyf was rude  
That hadde a mā shold wedde his sympletyde  
Men shold wedde aftyr hir astate  
For yongthe and olden often at debate  
But sythen she was fallen in the snare  
He must endure as othyr folk his care  
Fayr was this yong wyf and there wyth all  
As ony wesyf her body gent and small  
A seynt she werdyd curryd alle of sylk  
A carmech as whyte as morow mylk  
Op on her lendys wyth ful meny agore  
Whyte was her smok and broyden al before  
And eke lehynde on her coler aboute  
Of cokelak sylk wythynne & eke wythoute  
The tapetis of her whyte Boluxer  
Were of the same sute of the coler  
Her filet broode of silk and set ful hye  
And sikprly she hadde a lykerous eye  
Ful smale y pulkyd were here browis also  
And they were kente and blak as ony so  
She was moche more blyssful on to see  
Than is the nelbe tre genet tree  
And softer than is the bulle of a weder  
And by her gyrdyl hangyth a purs of leder  
Tarselody wyth sylk and perdy wyth laton  
In al this world to seeke & and deun  
There is noman so wyse that coude thence  
So gay a purpelt or so praty a benche  
Ful bryghter was she shynnyng of her hue  
Than in the toun the nobyl forayd nelbe  
But of her songe it was as kild & yern  
As ony swabill sittynge on the fern  
Therto she coude skyppe and make game  
As ony kyd or calf folowynge his dame  
Her mouth was swete as braket or methe  
Or hord of apples leydy on ley or feth

## The Myllers tale

Wynsynge she was as is a joly colt  
Long as a mast and sprygh: as a colt  
A broc she bar vp on hyr bow coler  
As brood: as is the boos of a cokeler  
Here shoon were laced on hyr leggis hye  
She was a prymerolle a pyggis nye  
For ony lord to liggen in hys bed  
Or yet for ony good: yeman to bed  
Holt syre and eft syre so ketyl the mas  
That on a day thys send: Nicholas  
Ful wyth thys pongr wyf to rage & to pleye  
Whylps that her husband: was at Osenepe  
As clerkys be ful subtyl and: ful queynt  
And: pryuely he caughte hyr the by queynt  
And: sayd: ywys but yf I haue my wyffe  
For den: loue of the lemman I swyffe  
And: held: her hard by the synnk bones  
And: sayd: lemman loue me all at onys  
Or: I wolde dye al so god: me saue  
And: she sprong: as a celt doth in the traue  
And: wyth her ked: she wyeth faste alway  
She sayd: I wol not kysse the by my fay  
Why let be quod: she let be Nicholas  
Or: I wyf aye out harow and: alas  
Do wey your hondis for your curtesye  
Thys Nicholas gan mercy for to aye  
And: spak so fayre & proferd: her so faste  
That she her boue graunted: hym at the last  
And: swere her oth by saynt Thomas of Kent  
That she wolde be at hys comaundement  
Whan that she may her leysur wel espye  
My husband: is so ful of Ielousye  
That but ye wapte wel and: be pryue  
I wolte ryght wel I nam but ded: quod: she  
Ye mu't be ful den: as in thys mas  
Naw therof care the not quod: Nicholas  
Entyrelly a clerk had: ketyl hys wyffe  
But yf he coude a carpenter begyle

## The Myllers tale

And thus they ben accorded and y shorn  
To buyte a tyme as I haue told before  
Whan Nicholas hadde do thus euerydele  
And thackyd her aboute the lendys wel  
He kyfte her swete and took hys salbte  
And pleyde faste and made melodye  
Than fyl it thus that to the parssh chyrche  
Crysstys olben berkis for to beren  
Thys good wyf wente on an holiday  
Her forked shoon as bryghte as ony day  
So was it wasshe when she leet her berk  
Nolde was ther of that chyrche a parssh clerk  
The whiche that was y clepyd abschon  
Cruked was his her & as the gold it shon  
And stowbtyd as a fan large and brood  
Ful streyght and euen lay hys joly shod  
Hys rode was red hys eyen gray as goos  
Wyth rollys byndolles couen in hys shoo  
In hosis red he wente ful fetoulsly  
Pclady he was ful smal and fetoulsly  
Alike in a kyrtyl of a lyght woget  
Ful fayne and thycke he the pepr tie set  
And ther vpon he hadde a gay surpys  
As whete as is the blossom on the ryse  
A mery chylde he was so good me saue  
Wel coude he leten blood & clyppe and shoue  
And make a charter of lond & aquytance  
In twenty maners coude he trype & daunce  
Aftyr the scole of Osenforde tho  
And wyth hys legges caste to & fro  
And pleye songis on a smale rylle  
Ther to he songe somtyme a bolde quynelle  
And as wel coude he play on hys geterne  
In al the town nas brellbe hous ne tauerne  
That he ne bysited wyth hys felawe  
There as ony gaylard tapster was  
But soth to say he was for del schelmyous  
Of faryng and of speche daungerous

## The Myllers tale

Thys absolon that Jolyf was and gay  
Goth wyth a sencer on the holy day  
Sensynge wyrys of the parysch fast  
And many a kuelly loke on hem he cast  
And namely on thys carpenters wyf  
To loke on hyr hym thoughte a mery lyf  
She was so propre swete and eek lykewys  
I dar wel say yf she had he a molys  
And he a cat he wolde her hente anon  
Thys parysch clerk thys Joly absolon  
Hath in hys hert such a loue longynge  
That of no wyf wike he non offrynge  
For curtesye he sayd he wolde non  
The mone whan it was nyght bryght shoon  
And Absolon hys gyterne hadde I take  
For paramours he thoughte for to make  
And forth he goth Jolyf and amorous  
Tyl he cam to the Carpenters hous  
A lytyl after cockys hadde y rowle  
And dressed hym by by the shot wyndolwe  
That was upon the Carpenters wal  
He syngeþ in hys boys gentyl and smal  
Nolw dere lady / yf thy wyf he  
I pray you that ye wyf thynke on me  
Iful wel accordynge to hys gyternynge  
Thys carpenter alvokke & herde hym synge  
And spak unto hys wyf and sayd anon  
What alyson ferist thou not absolon  
That chaunteyth thus Under our colbris wal  
And she answerd her husbond ther wyth al  
Yes godi boot John I herre it euerydel  
Thys passeth forth what wyf ye let than wel  
From day to day this Joly absolon  
So wolbeth her that he is wo begoon  
He waketh al the nyght and al the day  
He kempte hys lockis brode & made hym gay  
He wolbeth her by menes and brocage  
And swoor he wolde be her olven page

## The Myllers tale

He syngeth broekynge as anyghtyngale  
He sent astyr pyment methis and spredde ale  
And wakis pyppynge hoot out of the glee  
And for he was of toun he proferd mede  
For some folk wol be wonnen for ryckesse  
And some for strokis and some for jolynesse  
Som time he sheweth his lustynesse & maistrie  
He pleyeth herodes by on a scaffolt hye  
But what auayleth hym as in this case  
She sued so this hend Nicholas  
That absolon may sholde the buckis horn  
He ne hadde for his labour but a scorn  
And thus he maketh absolon his axe  
And at his earnest turneth tyl a jape  
Ful soth is this proverbe it is no lye  
Men say ryght thus alwey the nyghte she  
Maketh the fer leef for to be both  
For though that absolon be wood or broth  
We cause that he fer was from his fight  
This nyght Nicholas stood in his lycht  
Noli here the wel thou hend Nicholas  
For Absolon may wayle and synge Alas  
And so ketyl it that on a saturday  
This carpenter was gon tyl Osnay  
And eke hend Nicholas and Alyson  
Acorded be fully to this conclusion  
That Nicholas shal shapen hym a wyle  
This sely Jekons husbond to begyle  
And yf so be the game wente a ryght  
She shold slepe in his arms al nyght  
For this was his desyre and his also  
And ryght anon wythout wordys mo  
This Nicholas no longer wold tarpe  
But doith ful softe in to his chambr carpe  
Bothe mete and drynke for a day or thre  
And to his husbond lady ser for to sepe  
Yf that he acord astyr Nicholas  
She shold say she nyghte where he was

## The Myllers tale

Of al that day she salu hym not wyth eye  
She troweth that he is in some maladye  
For that no wyf her mayde couthe hym calle  
He wolde answer for nothyng myghte falle  
Thys passyth forth al that saturday  
That Nicholas stykke in hys chambyr lay  
And ete or sleep or dede what hym lyst  
Tyl sonday that the sonne goth to rest  
Thys self carpenter hath greet meruayle  
Of Nicholas or what myght hym ayle  
And sayd I am adrad by saynt Thomas  
It stondyth not aright wyth Nicholas  
God shuld it that he deyde sodenly  
Thys world is now ful tylkefyl sikyrlly  
I salbe a wyf to day fore to chyrche  
That now a monday last I seyh hym wyrtch  
Go by quod he vnto hys knaue anon  
Eke at the dore or knocke wyth a ston  
Loke how it is and telle me boldely  
Thys knaue goth hym by ful sturdelly  
And at the chambir dore whyl that he stood  
He cryde and knockedy as he were wood  
What how what doe ye mayster Nicholas  
How may ye slepen al the long day  
But al for nought he herd not a word  
An fool ful bolde he found by on a word  
Eke as the cat was about in forw cepe  
And at the hole he looked in ful depe  
Tyl at the last he hadde of hym a sight  
Thys Nicholas satte gappynge eynt spright  
As he hadde kyked on the newe mone  
Adown he goth and told hys mayster sone  
In what aray he salu thys ylle man  
Thys carpenter he blyssed hym began  
And sayd help us saynt frydeswyde  
A man boot tytel what hym shal helpe  
Thys man is fallen wyth hys astronomye  
In some woodnesse or in some agonye

## The Myllers tale

He syngeth broekynge as anyghyngale  
He sent astyr pymment methe and spyrde ale  
And wastis pyppinge hoot out of the glee  
And for she was of toun he proferde mede  
For some folk wol be bonnen for rycheesse  
And some for strokis and some for Joly nesse  
Som time he sheweth his lustynesse & maistrie  
He plepeth herodes by on a scaffolt hys  
But what auayleth hym as in thys case  
She bued so thys hendy Nicholas  
That absolon may shalve the buckis horn  
He ne hadde for hys labour but a scorn  
And thus she makyth absolon her ape  
And al hys ernest turneth tyl a jape  
ful soth is thys prouerbe it is no lye  
Men say ryght thus alwey the nyghte she  
maketh the fer leef for to be both  
For though that absolon be wood or broth  
We cause that he fer was from hys sight  
Thys nyghte Nicholas stood in hys lycht  
Now here the wel thou hendy Nicholas  
For Absolon may wayle and synge Alas  
And so ketyl it that on a saturday  
Thys carpenter was gon tyl Osney  
And eke hendy Nicholas and Alyson  
Acordyd be fully to thys conclusion  
That Nicholas shal shapen hym a wyfe  
Thys sely Jekus husbond to begyle  
And yf so be the game wente a ryght  
She shold slepe in hys arms al nyght  
For thys was her desyre and his also  
And ryght anon wythout wordys mo  
Thys Nicholas no longer wold tarpe  
But doith ful softe in to hys chambr carpe  
Bothe met and drynke for a day or tweye  
And to her husbond lude he for to sey  
Yf that he ayde astyr Nicholas  
She shold say she nyte where he was

## The Myllers tale

Of al that day she salu hym not wyth eye  
She troweth that he is in some maladye  
For that no wyf her mayde couthe hym calle  
He nolde answer for nothyng myghte falle  
Thys passyth forth al that saturday  
That Nicholas styll in hys chambyr lay  
And ete or sleep or dede what hym lyst  
Tyl sonday that the sonne goth to weste  
Thys self carpenter hath gret meruayle  
Of Nicholas or what myghte hym ayle  
And sayd I am adrad by saynt Thomas  
It stondyth not aright wyth Nicholas  
God shylde it that he deyde sodenly  
Thys world is now ful tylkefyl sikkyll  
I salve a corpe to day fore to chyrche  
That now a monday last I seyh hym wyche  
Go by quod he into hys knave anon  
Elepe at the dore or knocke wyth a ston  
Loke how it is and telle me boldely  
Thys knave goth hym by ful sturdeley  
And at the chambir dore whyl that he stood  
He cryde and knocked as he were wood  
What how what doe ye mayster Nicholas  
How may ye slepen al the longe day  
But al for nought he seyd not a word  
An hool ful bolde he fond by on a boorde  
There as the cat was wont in forto crepe  
And at the hole he looked in ful depe  
Tyl at the last he hadde of hym a sighte  
Thys Nicholas satte gappynge euyr byright  
As he hadde kyked on the new mone  
Adoun he goth and told hys mayster sone  
In what aray he salu thys ylle man  
Thys carpenter to blysse hym began  
And sayd help us saynt frydeswyde  
Aman woot bytyl what hym shal betyde  
Thys man is fallen wyth hys astronomye  
In some woodnesse or in some agonye

## The Myllers tale

I thoughte ay wel how it shold be  
Men shold not knowe of goddis prynces  
Y blessed be alwey allewde man  
That nought but only hys beleue can  
So ferde anothe clerk wyth astronomye  
He walkede in the felde for to pryve  
Upon the sterres what ther shold befall  
Eyl he was in a marlepit y falle  
He saw not that but yet by saynt Thomas  
Me wel wyth fore of sende Nicholas  
He shal be wate of hys studyng  
If that I may by ihesu beyn kynge  
Get me a staf that I may vnderpore  
Whyle that thou Robyn beyn of the dore  
He shal out of thys studyng as I gesse  
And to the chambr dore he gan hym dresse  
His knave was a strong chorde for the nonys  
And by the hasp he haf it vpon onys  
In to the floor the dore fyl anon  
Thys Nicholas sat ay as styll as ston  
And eyr gaped vplward in the eyr  
Thys carpenter wende that he were in despayr  
And sente hym by the sholdris myghtely  
And shok hym harde and cryde spewously  
What Nicholas what how looke a down  
Awake and thynk on crystis passion  
I crouche the fro elyng and fro wyghtis  
Ther wyth the nyghtspel sayd he anon rightis  
On four halys on the hous aboute  
And on the threshold of the dore wythout  
Jhesu cryst and saynt benedyght  
Blysse thys hous from euery wyckid wyght  
For nyghtis berry the wyght pater noster  
Where wonnest thou saynt Petris suster  
And at the last thys sende Nicholas  
Can for to sighe sore and sayd alas  
Shal al the world be lost eftenes now  
Thys carpenter answerd what sayst thou

## The Myllers tale

What think on god? as we do men þ' shynne  
 Thys Nicholas answered sette me doun  
 And after wyf I speke to the in pryncipe  
 Of certayn thyngis that toldeken me and the  
 I wyll tel it non oþyr man certayn  
 Thys carpenter goth doun and comyth agayn  
 And broughte of myghty ale a large quart  
 And when ech of hem hadde dronke hys part  
 Thys Nicholas hys dore faste sette  
 And doun the carpenter by hym he sette  
 He sayd John myn host leue and dere  
 Thou shalt by on thy trouthe swere me here  
 That to no wight thou shalt this counsel brey  
 For it is crystis counsel that I sey  
 And yf thou telle it man thou art forlore  
 For thys vengeance thou shalt haue therfore  
 That yf thou breye it / man shalt be wood  
 May crist forke it for hys very blood  
 Quod tho thys sely man I am no blabbe  
 Ne thogh I say I am not leue to gabbe  
 Say what thou wyllt I shal it neuere telle  
 To chyldre ne wyf by hym that haroldeþe selle  
 Now John quod Nicholas I wyll not lye  
 I haue founde it in myn astrologye  
 As I haue looked in the mone bright  
 That now a monday next at quarter nyght  
 Shal falle a rayn & that so wyld & wood  
 That half so gret was neuer noes flood  
 Thys world he sayde in lesse than in an hour  
 Shal al be dreynt so hydous is the shour  
 Thus shal mankynde drench and lese her lyf  
 Thys carpenter answered alas my wyf  
 And shal she drench alas my alifoun  
 For sorow of thys he fyl almost adoun  
 And sayde is ther no remedy in thys cas  
 Why pes for god? quod fende Nicholas  
 Yf thou wyllt worke after sore and red  
 Thou mayst not worke after thyn olben led

## The Myllers tale

For thus sayth Salamon that was ful trewe  
Worke al by counsel & thou shalt not welbe  
And yf thou worke wyllt by good counsel  
I vndertake wythouten mast or sayl  
Yet shal I saue here and the and me  
Hast thou not herd holv saued was Noe  
Whan that our lord hadde warned hym befor  
That al the world wyth water shold be bry  
Yes quod this Carpenter ful pore ago  
Hast thou not herd quod Nicholas also  
The sorow of Noe wyth his felleship  
Or that he myght gete his wyf to ship  
Hym hadde be leuer I dar wel vndertake  
At that tyme than al his wetheris blake  
That she hadde had a shyp her self alone  
And therefore wotist thou what is best to done  
This askith haste and of an hasty thyng  
May men not preche ne make taryng  
Anon go gete be faste in to this in  
A kenedyng trowgh or ellis a kemelyn  
For eke of be but like that they be large  
In whiche we molde byrmen as in a large  
And haue therin vitayl suffiaunt  
But for o day fy on the remenaunt  
The water shal a flake and go alway  
About prime by on the nexte day  
But forby may not wyte of this thy knawe  
Ne eke thy mayden gylle I may not saue  
Aye not why for though thou aske me  
I wyll not telle goddis pryuyte  
It suffysith the but yf thy wit be made  
To haue as greet a grace as noe had  
Thy wyf shal I wel saue out of doute  
Go now thy wey and speede the hitte aboute  
But whan thou hast for the and for and me  
Y gotten be this kenedyng tubbis thre  
Than shalt thou longe be in the roof ful hye  
That noman of our pourueyance espye

## The Myllers tale

And whan thou thus hast don as I haue seyd  
And hast our vytayl fayre in hem y leyd  
And eke an eye to smyte the corde a tibo  
Whan that the watyr cometh that we may go  
And breke an hool an hygh vpon the gabyl  
In to the gardyn ward ouer the stabyl  
That we may frely passe forth our way  
Whan that the grette shour is passid alway  
Tha shul we swymme as merily I undertake  
As doth the whyte dake aftyr the drake  
Than wyl I clepe holb alson holb John  
Be mery for the flood wyl passe anon  
And thou wylt say hyl mayster Nicholas  
Godde morow I se the wel for it is day  
And than shal we be lordys al our lyf  
Of al the world as noe and hys wyf  
But of o thyng I warne the ful ryght  
Be wel awysyd on that ilke nyght  
Whan we be entred in to the shyp bord  
That none of vs ne speke not a word  
Ne clepe ne crye but be in hys prayere  
For it is goddis olven best dre  
Thy wyf & thou must hang fer a tbyn  
For that betwix you shal be no spyn  
Nomore in lokynge than ther shal in dede  
Thys ordenaunce is sayd goo god the spede  
To morow at nyght whan folk be alle a slepe  
Into our knedynge tubbis wyl we crepe  
And sittyn there abydynge goddis grace  
So now thy wey I haue no lenger space  
To make of thys no lenger sermonynge  
Men sey thus send the wyse & say nothyng  
Thou art so wyse it nedyth the not to tch  
God saue our lyf and that I the beseech  
Thys sely Carpenter goth forth hys weye  
Ful oft he sayd alas & welealweye  
But to hys wyf he told thys pryuyte  
And she was waar & knew it bet than he

## The Myllers tale

What al thys queynte cast was for to seye  
But natheles she ferde as she wolde deye  
And sayde alas go forth thy wey anon  
Help us to scape or we be dede echone  
I am thy trewe very weddid wyf  
Go dere spouse and help to saue our lyf  
Lo whyche a gret thyng is affection  
Men may dye al day of ymagynacion  
So dere may impressioun be take  
Thys sely carpenter begynneth quake  
Hym thynketh veryly that he may se  
Noes flood come wakhynge as the see  
To drenchen alson his hony dere  
He wepyth waplyth and maketh sorp chere  
He spyked wyth many a sorp sibough  
He goth and getyth hym a knedynge trough  
And after that a tub and a kemelyn  
And pruely he sent hem to his in  
And henge hem in the roof in pryuyte  
His olben hond he made ladders thre  
To clymben by the rengis and the stalkis  
In to the tubbis hangynge in the bulkes  
And hem bytapyth to the trough and tub  
Wyth breede and chese & good ale in a jub  
Suffysyng right ynolde as for o day  
But or that he hadde maad alle that aray  
He sente his knaue and eke his wench also  
Up on his ernde to london for to goo  
And on the monday when it drelle to nyght  
He shyte his dore wythoute candel lyght  
And dressyd al thyng as it shold be  
And shortly by they clymben alle thre  
Ther spyttyng seyle wel a fursonge waye  
Nolde pater noster clum sayde Nycholape  
And clum sayde John & clum sayde alysen  
Thys Carpenter sayde his deuocion  
And seyle he spyttyth & byddyth his prayere  
Abaytynge on the rayn yf he it here

## The Myllers tale

The dede sleep for lbery besynesse  
fyl on thys carpenter right as I gesse  
Aboute curfu tyme or lityl more  
For trauayl of hys ghest he growyth sore  
And eft he wolbitth for hys hed mys lay  
Doun of the ladder stalkeyth nicholay  
And alson ful soft down she spede  
Wpouth wordis mo they go to lede  
Ther as the carpenter was wont to lye  
Ther was the tuel and the melodye  
And thus lieth alson and Nicholas  
In besynes of myrthe and in solas  
Tyl that the belle of laudes gan to ryng  
And frenis in the chauncel gan to synge  
Thys parysh clerk thys amorous absolon  
That is for loue alwey so wo begon  
Up on the monday was at Osney  
Wpith compaigne hym to dysport and pley  
And askyd vpon a mas a choysterer  
Ful pruely aftyr John the carpenter  
And he dreib hym apart out of the chyrche  
And sayd I not I salb hym not wyrtche  
Synth saturday I trolb that he be went  
For tymber ther our abbot hath hym sent  
For he is wont for tymber for to go  
And dwelle at the graunge a day or two  
Or ellis he is at hys hous arteyn  
Whe that he be I can not sothly sayn  
Thys absolon ful joly was and lyght  
And thought now is tyme to walke al nyght  
For sikirly I salb hym not steryng  
Aboute hys dore syn day gan to spryng  
So moot I thryue I shal or coekis tolbe  
Pruely knocken at hys wyndolb  
That stont ful bolbe up on hys colbris wal  
To alson now wol I tellen al  
My loue longynge for yet I shal not mys  
That at the leste wey I shal ser lye

## The Myllers tale

Som maner comfort shal I haue parfay  
My mouth hath itched al thys longe day  
That is a signe of kyssynge at the leste  
Al nyght me mette eke I was at a feste  
Therefor I wyl go slepe an hour or twayne  
And al the nyght than wil I walke & pleye  
Whan that the fyrst cock hath crowde anon  
Up risith thys joly luer absolon  
And hym arayeth gay at poynt deuyse  
But first he chyllyth grayn and lycorpe  
To smellen swete or he hadde kempt hys heer  
Under hys tonge a trelw loue he heer  
For therby wende he to haue be gracious  
He cometh to the Carpenters hous  
And seyle he stont vnder the shot wyndolb  
Unto hys brest it raught it was so bolde  
And softe he collyeth wyth a semysoun  
What do ye honpcombe swete alysoun  
My feyre hyrde my swete synamome  
Al waketh lemman myn and speke to me  
Ful lytel thynke ye vp on my woo  
That for your loue I swete there I goo  
No wonder is though I swete and swete  
I moine as doth a lamb after the te  
I wys lemman I haue sucke loue longynge  
That lyk a turtyl trelbe is my moynynge  
I may not ete nomore than amayde  
Go fro the wyndolb jacke fool she sayde  
As helpe me god it wol not be comfame  
I loue another and ellis I were to blame  
Wel bet than the by ihesu absolon  
Go forth thy wey or I wyl throlbe a stoon  
And let me slepe a tibenyt deuyf wey  
Alas quod Absolon and wel albey  
That trelbe loue was cypre so euell he set  
Than kys me syn it may be noo bet  
For ihesus loue and for the loue of me  
Wylt thou than go thy wey therlwith quod she

## The Myllers tale

Pe certis lemmayn quod: thys alfolon  
 I kan make the redy quod: she J come anon  
 And: vnto Nicholas she sayd: styll  
 Noll wee & thou shalt laibge all thy fyll  
 Thys absolon doun set hym on hys knees  
 And: sayd: J am a lord: at al degrees  
 For: aftyr thys J hope ther comyth more  
 Lemmayn thy grace & swete byrd: thyn ore  
 The wyndolbe she vndoth and: that in haste  
 Haue do quod: she com of and: spede the faste  
 Lest that our neyghebouris the aspye  
 Thys absolon gan wypp hys mouth ful drye  
 Derke was the nyght as pyele or cool  
 And: at the wyndolbe she put out her fool  
 And: absolon hym felte ne fet ne livers  
 But wyth hys mouth he kyssed her eris  
 Ful sauerly or he were ware of thys  
 A hee he seert and: thoughte it was amys  
 For: wel wyfte he a womman hadde no ferde  
 He felte a thyng: al tolb and: longe hend:  
 And: sayd: fy alas what haue J do  
 Telle quod: she and: clappid: the wyndolb to  
 And: Absolon goth forth a sope paas  
 A kerde a kerde sayd: hend: Nicholas  
 Wy goddis corpus thys goth fayr and: weel  
 Thys sely absolon: kerde euery deel  
 And: on hys lype he gan for angyr byte  
 And: to hym self he sayd: J shal the quyte  
 Who rubbit noll who frotith: noll hys appie  
 Wyth dust wyth cloth wyth sonde wyth chypis  
 But Absolon that sayth ful ofte alas  
 My soule betake J sayd: he to sathanas  
 But me were leuyr than al this toun quod he  
 On thys despyt all brokyn forto he  
 Alas quod: he alas that J ne hadde blent  
 Hys hoot loue was cold: and: al queynt  
 For: fro that tyme that he hadde kyssed her ars  
 Of paramours set he not a care

## The Myllers tale

For he was helid of hys maladye  
Ful ofte paramours gan he dyffye  
And wepte as doth a chylde that is bete  
A softe paas he wente hym ouer the strete  
Wnto a symyth men callid dane gerueys  
That in hys forge symyth phylb harnes  
He sharpyth the share and the cultre besily  
Thys absolon knockyth all esely  
And sayd vnto geruays and that anon  
What lwh art thou/ it am I absolon  
What absolon/ what crystes swete tree  
Why ryste ye so rathe/er benedicte  
What cyleth you some gay gyrl god it boot  
Hath brought you thus vpon the vergete  
By sernt Note/ye boote lwhat I mene  
Thys absolon ne wought not a bene  
Of alle thys pley agayn no word he paf  
He hadde wel more tolb on hys dyscraf  
Than geruays knel and sayd frend so deere  
That hoot cultre in the chymney here  
As lene it me I haue therlwyth to doon  
I wol brynge it the agayn ful sone  
Geruays answerd/ certis were it gold  
O: in a poke nobles alle vntold  
Thou sholdest it haue as I am trelwe symyth  
By crystis foot lwhat wyl ye doo therlwyth  
Therefore quod Absolon he as he may  
I shal wel telle it the to morow or day  
And caughte the cultre by the cold stele  
Ful softe out of the dore he gan seke  
And wente vnto the carpenters wal  
He colghed fyrst and knocked therlwyth al  
Up on the wyndolwe/ ryght as he dyd er  
Thys alison answerd lwh is there  
That knockyth so y warant it a thef  
Why nay quod he god boot my swete les  
I am absolon thy olone derlinge  
Of gold quod he I haue the brought a ryng

## The Myllers tale

My moder gaf it me so god? me saue  
ful fyne it is and? therto wel I graue  
Thys wol I gyue the yf thou me kysse  
Thys nycolas was rylen forto pyss  
And? thoughte he wolde amende al the jape  
He shold? kysse hys ers or that he scape  
And? by the wyndow dede he hastely  
And? out hys ars he puttyth pryuelly  
Ouer the buttok to the shank soon  
And? ther wyth spak thys clerk Absolon  
Spek swete byrd? I not wher thou art  
Thys Nicholas anon let fle a fart  
As greet as it hath he a thonder dent  
That wyth th? swook he was almost I blent  
And? he was redy wyth hys pyen foot  
And? Nicholas amyd? the ers he smoot  
Of goth the skyn an hond? brede aboute  
The hoot? cultre brende so hys wolte  
And? for the smert he wende forto dye  
As he were wood? for woo he gan crye  
Help water water help for goddis sert  
Thys carpenter out of hys stompyr stert  
And? serde one crye water as he were wood?  
And? thoughte alas now comyth the flood?  
He set hym by wythout wordis mo  
And? wyth hys aye he smoot the corde a flou  
And? down goth all he fond? neyther to selle  
He brede ne ale tyl he come to the selle  
Upon the floor and? there a sboun he lay  
Up stert he alsoun and? Nicholas  
And? cryde out and? howle in the strete  
The neygheours bothe make and? grette  
In connyng for to gal'ryng on thys man  
That yet a sboun lay bothe pale and? wan  
For wyth the fal broste hath he hys arme  
But stonde he muste into hys oiben harme  
For whan he spak he was anon fore down  
Wyth hende Nicholas and? alsoun

## The Myllers tale

They told every man that he was wood  
So he was agast of noes flood  
Thorow fantasie that of hys Danyel  
He hadde bought hym keredynge tubbis thre  
And hadde hym hanged in the roof aboue  
And that he prayde hem for goddys loue  
To sittyn in the roof per companie  
The folk gan salyghen at hys fantasie  
In to the roof they kykyn and they gaze  
And turned al hys harm in to a jape  
For what so euer thys carpenter answerde  
It was for nought noman hys reson herde  
Wyth othys grete he was sboore a down  
That he was holde wood in all the town  
For every clerk right anon held wyth other  
They said the man was wood my leue brother  
And every wyght gan salyght at thys serf  
Thus swyrd was the carpenters wyf  
For al hys keepynge and al hys Iehouysye  
And absolon hath kyssed her nethyr eye  
And Nycholas is scalded in the tute  
This tale is doon and god saue al the route

Here endeth the Myllers tale  
And here begynneth the reues prologe

**W**han folk had salyghen at this nyxt caas  
Of Absolon and of hendy Nycholas  
Dyuerse folk dyuersly they sayden  
But for the more part they solste & pleyden  
He at thys tale I salbe noman hym greue  
But yf it were onky Osbold the reue  
By cause he was of carpenters craft  
A lytyl ire is in hys herte ther last  
He gan to gauce and blame it alyte  
By the quod he ful wel I coude the quyte  
Wyth bleyng of a proud myllers eye  
Yf that me lyst to speke of Fedandye

## The Reuees prologe

But I am old; me lyst not pleye for age  
Graas tyme is doon my foder is noll forage  
Thys whyppe twp whypptis my old; peris  
Myn hert also mouldy; is as myn her is  
But yet I fare as doth an open eris  
For that yllke faunt is euer longer the wers  
Tyl it be wotyn in mustokk or in seve  
We olde men I drede so faren we  
Tyl we be wotyn can we not be ryse  
We hoppyn allbey while the world wold pype  
For in our wyl ther styktyth euer a nayl  
To haue an hoore fred; and; a grene tayl  
As hath a leek for though our myght be gon  
Our wyl desirptis folp euer in one  
For whā we may nought do than wol we speken  
Yet in our affixen old; fyre is rekyen  
Four gledis haue we whyppe I shal deuyse  
Auauntynge hyngge anger and; couetyse  
Thyse four sparkelis longtyth vnto eld;  
Our old; tymys molbe we not felbeld;  
But wyl ne shal not sayke that is soth  
And; yet haue I allbey a coltis toth  
As many a yeer as it is passed; henne  
Sen that my tappe of lyp began to renne  
For sikprly whan I was born anone  
Deth drelbe the tappe of lyp and; let it gone  
And; euer seth hath so the tappe; ronne  
Tyl that almost al empty is the tonne  
The streame of lyp noll droppytis on the chymbe  
The sely tunge may wel ryngge and; chymbe  
Of wretchydnesse that past is ful pore  
Wytis olde folk saue dotage ther is nomore  
Whan that our host had; herd; thys sermonynge  
He gan to speken as lordly as a kyng;  
And; sayd; what amountith al thys wylt  
What shul we speke alday of holy wylt  
The deuel made a reue for to preche  
Of a soibter a shipman or a leche

## The Reues Prologe

Say forth thy tale and tarpe not the tyme  
To depford & it is halfwey to pryme  
To grenewich that many a shrelve is ynn  
It were al tyme thy tale for to begynne  
Nolde sires quode thys of wolde the rue  
I pray you al that ye you not greue  
Though þ I answere & somdel sette his houe  
For lesul is wyth force/force of shoue  
Thys drenkyn mykete hath tolde us here  
How that beglyde was a carpentere  
Paraventure in scorn for that I am one  
And by your leue I shal hym quyte anon  
Myght in hys churles teryms wol I speke  
I pray to god hys necke molde to breke  
He can wel in myn eye se a stalk  
But in hys owen he can not se a hulk  
Here endeth the Reues prologe  
And here begynneth hys tale



## The Reues tale

**A**t trompynton not far from Cambridge  
 Ther goth a brook & ouer that a bryge  
 Wyth on þe which brook ther stonde a mylle  
 And þys is verry soth that I you telle  
 A myller was there dwellyng many a day  
 As ony peok he was proude and gay  
 Wyth he coude and fyssh and nettis bete  
 And turne cuppis and wel brasse and shete  
 As by hys felt he huar a longe pauade  
 And of a sylver ful trenchant was the blaade  
 A joly popper huar he in hys pouche  
 Ther was noman for peril durste hym touche  
 A staffeld thlypkel huar he in hys hose  
 Round was hys face & camofsyd was hys nose  
 Also pylled as an Ape was hys skulle  
 He was a market leter at the fulle  
 Ther durste no wyght hond by on hym ledge  
 That he ne swoor anon he shold aledge  
 A thef he was for sothe of corn and mele  
 And that a slagh and vylant forto stele  
 Hys name was þe hote deynus Symkyn  
 A wyf he hadde þe comen of nobyl kyn  
 The person of the toun hys fader was  
 Wyth here he gaf many a panne of bras  
 For that Symkyn sholde in hys blood alpe  
 She was þe fosterer in a Nonnerpe  
 For Symkyn wold no wyfe as he sayde  
 But þe she were wel þe norisshe and a mayde  
 To saue hys estat of yemanrye  
 And she was proude and pert as a pye  
 A ful feyr sight was vpon hem tibo  
 An holy day befor her wold he go  
 Wyth hys tippet ybounde aboute hys hed  
 And she cam aftyr in a gyte of reed  
 And Symkyn hadde hosen of the same  
 Ther durst no wyght clepe her but dame  
 Was non so hardy that wente by the way  
 That wyth hys durste onys rage or play

## The Reues Tale

But yf he wolde be slayn of Symkyn  
Wyth pauade or wyth knyfe or bodkyn  
For Iehus folk ben parloous euermo  
Algas they wolde her wyrys wenden so  
Ande eke also for she was somdele smotirlich  
She was as dygne as watyr in a dych  
Ande ful of honour ande of hysmare  
Here thoughte a lady shold her spare  
What for her kynrede ande her nortylre  
That she had lernyd in the Monerpe  
A doughter hadde they betwix y hem tibo  
Of tibenye peer wythoute ony mo  
Sauynge a chyld that was of half peer age  
In acadyl it lay ande was a proper page  
Thys wenche thynke ande wel y growbe was  
Wyth Camops nose ande eyen grey as glas  
Buttolkis brode ande bresteis wunde ande hys  
But ryght fair was her heer I wyl not lye  
The parson of the tun for she was feyr  
In purpos was to make her hys feyr  
Bothe of hys Catel ande of hys mesuage  
Ande straunge he made it of her mariage  
His purpos was for to bestolbe her hys  
Wnto sum worthy blood of auna tye  
For holy churche goodes muste be spendyd  
On holy churche blood that is descendyd  
Therefore he wolde his holy blood honour  
Thoug that he holy churche shold deuoure  
Gret sokyn hath this myller out of doute  
Wyth wheat ande malt of al the bond aboute  
Ande namely ther was a gret Colege  
Men clepith it the soler halle at Cambrige  
There was her wheat & eke her malt y grounde  
Ande on a day it hapedy in a stounde  
Seek lape the manayl on a malady  
Men wenden wysly that he shold dy  
fro whom this myller stole bothe mele & corn  
An hundryd tyme more than he dyd befor

## The Reues tale

For there before he stal bul curteysly  
 But noli he was a theef outrageously  
 For whiche the wardyn chyde and made fare  
 But therof set this Myller not a care  
 He crakid; lost and; swore it was not so  
 Than were there yonge scolers tibo  
 That dweldyn in this halle of whiche I sey  
 Tese if they were and lusty forto pley  
 And; only for hyr myrthe and; reuelrye  
 Up on the wardyn bysply they crye  
 To geue hym leue but a lityl stounde  
 To go to the mylle & se her corn y grounde  
 And; hardely they durste ley her necke  
 The myller shold; not stele half a pecke  
 Of corn by slepyghte ne by force hem reue  
 And; at the laste the wardyn gaf hem leue  
 John highte that one & aleyne highte y other  
 Of a town were they born that hyghte stoder  
 Fer in the north I can not telle where  
 This Aleyn maketh redy alle hys gere  
 And; on an hors the sakes he cast anon  
 Forth goth aleyne the clerk & eke John  
 With good; sberdy And; bokeler by hys syde  
 John knelbe the wey hym neddy; no to gyde  
 And; at the mylle the sak adoun he lepyth  
 Aleyn spak first al hail Symond in feyth  
 Holb fatis thy fayre doughter and; thy wyf  
 Aleyn welcome quod; Symkyn by my lyf  
 And; John also holb noli what do ye here  
 Symond quod John by god nede has no pere  
 Hym bus serue hym self that has no swayn  
 Or ellis he is a fool as clerkis sayn  
 Our maynecpyl I hope he wol he ded;  
 Siba workis ap there wangiis in his sed;  
 And; therfor I is come and; thys aleyne  
 To grynde our corn and; cary it home agayn  
 I pray you spede vs seyn in that ye may  
 It shal be do quod; Symkyn by my fay

## The Reues Tale

What wil ye do whilis it is in hond  
By godd ryght by the hope i wol I stonde  
Quod John and se how the corn goes yn  
Yet salbe I neuyr by my fauour kyn  
Holt the hope baggis to and fro  
Aleyn answerd John wolt thou so  
Than wol I be fenethe by my crown  
And se hou the mele fallis down  
In to the trollygh that shal be my dysport  
For John in fayth I may be of your sort  
I is as ille a myllere as is ye  
Thys myllere smyled of her nyete  
And thoughte al this is don but for a wyle  
They wene that noman may hem begyle  
But by my thurst yet shal I blere her eye  
For al the slepygh and her philosophye  
The more queynte creakis that they make  
The more shal I stele whan I take  
In steede of flour yet wil I geue hem bren  
The grettist clerkis be not the wyssest men  
As whilom to the wolf thus spak the mare  
Of alle her art ne counte I not a care  
Out at the dore he goth ful vryuely  
Whan that he salbe hys tyme softly  
He wylpeth by and down tyl he hath founde  
Thys clerkys hors where it stood y bounde  
Behynde the mylle vnder a leefsel  
And to the hors he goth faire and wel  
He sterypyth of the krydil ryght anon  
And whan the hors was booe he gan to gon  
Tolward the fenne where wilde maris wene  
Forth with wech thurgh thicke & thynne  
This myllere goth ayeen no word he seide  
But doth his note & wyth the clerkis pleyde  
Til that her corn was feire & wel grounde  
And whan the mele is sackid & bounde  
Thys John goth forth & fynt hys hors alweye  
And gan to crye harow and wel alweye

## The Reuee tale

Our hors is lost aleyh by cokkis lumps  
Strep on thy feet come of man alle at anys  
Allas our warderh hath hys palfrey born  
Thys aleyh al forgat bothe mele and corn  
Al was out of mynde hys husbondry  
What whypk lvey is he gon he gan crye  
The wyf come rennyng ynlward at a renne  
She sayd allas your hors goth to fenne  
Wyth wyld maties as faste as he may go  
Wonthank come on hys hand that bond hym so  
And he that lettyr shold haue knyt the reyne  
Allas quod John allas for crystis peyne  
Ley down thy swerd and I wyl myn allwa  
I is ful swyft / god woot as is a raa  
We godis sale he shal not ascape us hithe  
Why ne had thou put the capyl in the lathe  
Alle sayl he god aleyh thou is a fonne  
Thise sely clerkis haue wel faste y wonne  
Tolward the fenne bothe aleyh and eke John  
And when the myllere saw they were goon  
He half a bussel of her flour hath take  
And had hys wyf go kneede it in a cake  
He sayd I trow the clerkis were aserd  
Yet can a myllere make a clerkis berd  
For al her art yet let hem go her lvey  
So where they goon so lat the chyliden pley  
They gete hym nought so lyghtly by my crown  
Thise sely clerkis rennyh vp and down  
Wyth kepe kepe stond stond Jossa wate derere  
Ga whysle thou there & I shal kepe hym here  
But shortly tyl it was verely nyght  
They coude not though they dede al her myght  
Her capyl catche he ran allwey so faste  
Tyl in a dycke they caughte hym at the laste  
Wery and weet as lest is in the rayn  
Comyth John the clerk & with hym come aleyh  
Allas quod John the day that I was born  
Now are we dryuen tyl lethynge & tyl scorn

## The Reues tale

Our corn is stole men wylle be folis calle  
Bothe the wardyn and our felowys alle  
And namely the myller wel a wey  
Thus pleyneyth John as he goth by the wey  
Toward the mylle and bypard in hys hond  
The myller sittynge by the fyre he fond  
For it was nyght & ferther myght they nought  
But for the loue of god they hym besought  
Of herterolsh and of ese as for her peny  
The myller sayd agayn yf ther be eny  
Such as it is yet shulle ye haue your part  
My hous is serapt but ye haue lernyd art  
Ye can by argumentis maken a place  
A myle brood of twenty foot of space  
Let se noll yf thys place wol suffice  
Or make it romer with specke as is your wyse  
Holl symond said this John by saynt Cutberd  
Np is thou mery and that is wel ansiberd  
I haue herd say men shal take of tba thyngis  
Slypk as he fyndis or slypk as he byngis  
But speccally I pray the hoost so dre  
Ete be som mete & drynke & make be chere  
And be wel paye treldy at the fulle  
With empty hondis men may not halldis tulle  
Lo her my siluer redy for to spende  
Thys myller to the town hys daughter sende  
For ale and breed and rostdy hem a goos  
And bond her hors he shold nomore go hoos  
And in hys olben chamber he made a bed  
With sters & wyth chabons fure I spred  
Not from hys olben bed ten foot or elvelue  
Hys daughter had a bed al by her selue  
Ryght in the same chambyr by and by  
It myghte be no let and cause why  
Eter was no romer herterolsh in the place  
They soupen and spekyng hem of solace  
And dronky a eyr stronge ale atte feste  
About mydnyght wente they to reste

## The Reues tale

Wel hath thys mylker Bernysstredz hys hedz  
ful pale he was for dronke & nat redz  
He yevyth and he spekith thorow the nose  
As he were in the quacke or on the pose  
To fedde he goth and wyth hym goth hys wyf  
As ony Jay was she lyght and jolyf  
So was her Joly wyhyseyl wel y wet  
The cradyl at hys beddis feet was fet  
To rocken and to yeue the chylde solwe  
And when that dalwyn was in the colwe  
To fedde wente the doughter right anone  
To fedde goth aleyne and also John  
Eter nas nomore ther nedyth hem no dwale  
Thys mylker hath so wysely bibeledz ale  
That as an hors he snortith and slepe  
He of hys tayl behynde he toke no kepe  
Hys wyf bare hym a burdon ful stronge  
Men myghte here coltyngz here a furlonge  
The wench coltedz eke par company  
Aleyne the clerk that herde thys melody  
He colyde John and sayde slepist thou  
Hardist thou euer syke a songe or nolle  
Lo wyllk a colpyng is atvene hem alle  
A wyld fyre vpon her bodyes falle  
Who herde euer sylk a ferly thyng  
Pe they shal haue the flour of yll endyng  
Thys longe nyght ther tyde me no reste  
But yet nofor al shal be for the beste  
For John sayde aleyne al so mot I thryue  
If that I may yon wench wol I slyue  
Som esement hath shalbe shapen vs  
For John thre is a calve that sayth thus  
That yf a man in o thyng be agreued  
That in anothe he shal be releued  
Our corn is stole sothly hys is no nay  
And we haue had an euyl fyte to day  
And syn I shal haue non amendement  
Agayns my losse I wol haue esement

## The Reues tale

Be goddis sale it shal non othyr be  
E hys John answerd aleyn aysc the  
The myllere is a pruous man he seyd  
And yf that he out of hys slepe abyeyde  
He myght do be luttre a belony  
Aleyn answerd I counte hym not a flye  
And yf he rise and yf the benche he crep  
Thys benche lay vpright and fast sleep  
Tyl he so ny was or she myght aspye  
That it had he to late for to crye  
And shortly for to telle they were atone  
Nolw pley Aleyn for I wyl swete of John  
Thys John hath seple a furbunglwey or woo  
And to hym self he made routh and woo  
Allas quod he this is a wickedy jape  
Nolw may I say that I is but an ape  
Yet hath my felow somwhat for hys harm  
He hath the myllars daughter in hys arme  
He auntyd hym and hath hys nedie spedde  
And I ly as a drasfak in my bedde  
And whan this jape is told anothyr day  
I shal be holdy a daffe a cokney  
I wyl a ryle and auntye it be my feyth  
Conhardy is vnsely thus men seyth  
And yf he roos and softly he went  
Unto the cradyl and in hys arm it bent  
And hure it softe vnto hys beddis feet  
Sone after the wyf hys wyltynge let  
And gan alwake and wente her out to pyffe  
And cam ayen and gan hys cradyl myffe  
And gropid here & there but she fond non  
Allas quod she I hadde almost myf gon  
I hadde almost goon to the clerkis bed  
E y benedicate than hadde I foule sped  
And forth she goth tyl she the cradyl fond  
She groppeth allwey farther wyth her hond  
And fond þe bed & thoughte nought but good  
By cause that the cradyl by it stood

## The Reuece tale

And nyght where she was for it was dark  
But fayr and wel she cepte into the clerk  
And lith ful still & bold haue caught a sleep  
Wp<sup>th</sup> ynn a whyle thys John by leep  
And on thys good wyf he lepeth on sore  
So mery a fytte ne hadde not she ful yore  
He prysyd hard and sore as he were mad  
Thys Joly wyf haue thys tibo clerkis lad  
Tyl that the thrydde cock began to synge  
Aleyn weyt wery in the dalwynge  
For he had swonken al the longe nyght  
And sayd fare wel malyn swete wyght  
The day is come I may no longer byde  
Yet euermore where so y go or ryde  
I am thyn olben clerk so haue I seke  
Nolb dere lemman quod she go fare wel  
But or thou go o thyng I wol the telle  
Wen y thou wendyst homeward by the melle  
Nyght attre entre of the dore behynde  
Thou shalt a cake of half abussful fynde  
That was maad of thyn olben mele  
Wher that I halp my spre forto stele  
And gode lemman god the saue & kepe  
And with that word almost she gan to wepe  
Aleyn vprist and thoughte or that it dalbe  
I wol go cepte in by my felalbe  
And fonde the cradyl wyth hys hond anon  
We god thoughte he al wronge haue I gon  
My heor is toty of my swynk to nyght  
That makyth me that I go not a right  
I wote wel by the cradyl I haue mys go  
Here lith the myllere and hys wyf also  
And forth he goth a tlbenty deupl way  
In to the fed there the myllere lay  
He wende haue axen in by hys felow John  
And by the myller in he cepte anon  
And caughte hym by the necke & softe spak  
He sayd thou John thou swyneshe alwake

## The Kene's tale

For crystis soule and here a nobyl game  
For by that lord that callid is saynt Jame  
As I haue thyres in this short nyght  
Slypypd the myllere's daughter holt vpright  
Whylis thou hast as a colbard to agaste  
Ye false harlot quod the myllar haste  
A false traytour false clerke quod he  
Thou shalt be ded by goddis dysgnyte  
Who durste be so bolde to dysperage  
My daughter that is of such lynage  
And by the throte holle he caughte aleyne  
And he hente hym dyspitously agayne  
And on the nose he smot hym wyth his fist  
Down ran the bledy stream vpon his brest  
And in the shor wyth nose & mouth to broke  
They walowyd as piggis do in a poke  
And vpon they goon & down aye anon  
Tyl that the myllere sporned at a stoon  
And down he fyl backward on his wyf  
That wyf no thyng of this nyte scryp  
For she was falle a slepe a tytyl wyght  
With John þe clerk that wakyd had al nyght  
And wyth the fal out of her slepe she breyd  
Help holy xos of bromeham she sayd  
In manus tuas to the lord I calle  
Alwake symond the feend is on me falle  
Myn hert is brokyn helpe I am lute ded  
There lyeth one on my wombe and on my hed  
Help symkyn for the false clerke's fighthe  
This John stert vpon as faste as he myghte  
And graspyd by the wallis to and fro  
To fynde a staf and she stert vpon also  
And knelbe þe efters bet than dyd this John  
And by the wal a staf she took anon  
And salu a tytyl shymerynge of a light  
For at an hole in shoon the mone bryght  
And by that lyght she salu hem bothe alio  
But sikirly she nyte who was who

## The Myllers tale

And as she salve a whyt thyng in her eye  
And when she gan this whyt thyng aspye  
She bendeth the clerk andde beren a boiwyper  
And wyth the staf she dreth ay nere and nere  
And haue hit this aleyn at the ful  
And smoot the myller on the pollid skul  
And down he goth and cryde harow I dye  
The clerkis bet hym wel & let hym lye  
And greiden hem and toke hyr hors anon  
And eke hyr mele and on hyr wey they goon  
And atte mylle dore yet they took hyr cake  
Of half a bussel flour wel y bake  
Thus is the proud myller wel y bete  
And hath lost the gryndynge of the whete  
And payd for the soper euerydell  
Of Aleyn and of John that bete hym well  
Hys wyf is swyged and hys doughtyr als  
So sure it is a myller to be fals  
And thereto this prouerbe is sayd ful soth  
Hym dare not bene wel that euyl doth  
A gylour shal hym self begyled be  
And god that sit hygh in mageste  
Sawe al this companye grete and smale  
Thus haue I quyt the myller in my tale

Here endyth the Feys tale

And begynneth the cokis prologe

**T**he cook of London whyle the reue spak  
For ioye he thought he clalbid hym on þe bak  
A ha quod he for crystis olben passion  
This myller hath a sharp conclusion  
Op on hys argument of herbegage  
Wel soth sayde Salamon in hys langage  
He bynge not euery man in thy hous  
For heketwyllyng by nyght is perous  
Wel ought a man awspyd for to be

## The Tokes Prologe

Whom that he bringe in to his pryuyte  
I prey to god so yeue me sorow and care  
Of euyl sith that I hygher hodge of warre  
Herde I myller hit y set a werke  
He hadde a jape of malice in the derk  
But god forbode that we seynten here  
And therefore of ye vouchesauit to here  
A tale of me that am a poure man  
I wol you telle as wel as I can  
A lytyl jape that fyl in our cyte  
Our hoste answerde & sayde I graunt it the  
Nolde telle on roger boke that it be good  
For many a pasty haste thou lete blood  
And many a iacke of douer haste thou sold  
That had be thyngs hot and thyngs cold  
Of many a pylgrym haste thou crystis cure  
For of thy persely yet fare they the were  
That they haue eten wyth the seubbed ghos  
For in thy shop is many a flye loos  
Nolde tel on gentyl Roger by thy name  
But I pray the be not brothfor game  
A man may say ful soth in game and pley  
Thou sayst soth sayde Roger by my fey  
But soth pley quade pley as þe flemynge saith  
And therefore herry lully by thy feith  
We thou not broth ar we departen here  
Though that my tale be of an hostyllere  
But natheles I wol not telle it yet  
But or we depart I wis thou shalt be quyt  
And therewith al be lough and made chere  
And sayde his tale as he schul after here

Here endyth the Tokes prologe

And legynneth his tale

## The Tokis tale



**A** prentis wythpcom dwelt in our cyte  
 Of craft of bytaylor was he  
 As gaylard he was as gold syncke in þe shalbe  
 Broun as a berry a proper short felalbe  
 Wyth tokkis he kembid ful feruently  
 Daunce he coude wel and jolyly  
 Than he was clepyd Perkyng reuchour  
 He was as ful of loue and paramour  
 As is the hyue ful of honny swete  
 Wel was the benche that wyth hym myght slepe  
 And at every bridale wold he synge and hope  
 He souyd bettre the nethir ende than the shope  
 For wher ther ony rydynge was in chepe  
 Out of the shope thider wold he lepe  
 Tyl that he hadde al the sight y seyn  
 And daunsed wel he wold not come ayen  
 And gadryd hym a meyne of hys sort  
 To hope and synge & make such dysport

## The Reues Tale

And there they sette seuene for to mete  
To pleypp at the dysse in such a strete  
For in the town was there no prentysse  
That fayer couthe caste a pette of dysse  
Than Perkyn coude and ther to he was fre  
Of hys dyspence in place of pryncipe  
That fond hys mayster wel in hys chaffe  
For ostyme he fond hys box ful bare  
For shortly aprentis that is a reuebour  
That hauntith dysse riot and paramour  
His mayster shal it in hys shope abyde  
Al hane he no part of the mynstralsye  
For thefte and riot they be conuertibyll  
Al can he pleye on gyterne or Pybybyle  
Reuel and trouthe as in a bold degre  
They be ful wroth al day as men may se  
Thys joly prentis wyth hys mayster stood  
Tyl he was neer oute of hys prentisshood  
Al were he synbled bothe erly and late  
And sumtyme led wyth Feuel to Melbgate  
But atte laste hys mayster hym bethoughte  
Whon a day when he hys paper soughte  
Up on a prouerbe that sayth thys same word  
Wel ket is rotten appyl oute of hord  
Eken that he rotten al the xmenaunt  
So faryth it by a riotous seruauant  
It is ful lasse harm to late hym pace  
Than he shold al the seruauantis in the place  
Therefore hys mayster gaf hym aquyttaunce  
And bad hym go wyth sorow and myschaunce  
And thus thys joly prentis hadde hys leue  
Nolb let hym riot al the nyght or leue  
And ther is no theef withouten a solbke  
That helppth hym to waste and to solbke  
Of that he byrte can or soroll may  
Anon he sente hys led and hys away  
Onto a compere of hys olben sorte  
That buyth dysse riot and dysporte

## The man of Lawys Prologe

And hadde a wyf that held for contenaunce  
A shyp & subyued for hyr sustenaunce

Here endyth the Tokys Tale / And begynneth  
the man of lawys prologe

**O**we host salw wel that by þe bryght sonne  
The ark of hys artificial day had wonne  
The fourthe part & half an houre & more  
And thegh he were not depest stert in hore  
He wyfte wel it was the xviij day  
Of apryl that is messanger to may  
And salw wel that the shadow of euery tre  
Was as in lengthe of the same quantite  
That was the body erect that causid it  
And therefore by the shadow he took hys wyf  
That ptebus whych that shon so clere and bryght  
Degrees was yb clomben on bryght  
And for that day as in latytude  
Hyt was ten of the clokke he gan conclude  
And sodenly he pleyght hys hors aboute  
Foordynge quod he I barne you all the Foute  
The fourth part of this day is goon  
Now for the loue of god and saynt John  
Lese no tyme as ferforth as ye may  
Foordynge is the tyme wastyth bothe nyght and day  
And stelyth fro vs what pryncely sleppynge  
And what thurgh neglygence in our wakynge  
As doth the serme that turneth neuer agayn  
Descendynge fro the mounteyn in to the playn  
Wel can senek and many a philosophir  
Wel baylen tyme more than gold in cofyr  
For losse of catell may recovered be  
But losse of tyme stendyth vs quod he  
It wyll not come aghen wythouten drede  
Nomore than wol Malynes maydenhede  
Whan that she hath lost it in hyr wantownesse  
Let vs not molden thus in idelnesse

## The man of lawys prologe .

**A** Pre man of lawe quod he so haue ye blis  
Tel. Be a tale anon as forwarde is  
Ye he submytted thorough your fre assent  
To stonden in thys caas at my judgement  
Acquyte you now of your besteste  
Than haue ye do your deuoyr at the leest  
Hooste quod he depardieu Je assent  
To breke forwarde is not myn entent  
Wheste his dette and I wolde hold sayn  
Alle my besteste I can no better sayn  
For such lawe as man gyueth another wight  
He shold hym self vse it by ryght  
Thus wol our text but natheles certeyn  
I can ryght now no thyrsty tale seyn  
That Chaucer though he can but selvdly  
On metris and on rymyng craftely  
Hath sayd hym in such englysh as he can  
Of olde tyme as knoweth many a man  
And yf he ne hath not sayd hym leue brother  
In o book he hath sayd hym in another  
For he hath told of louers by and down  
Mo than Cupid made of menicun  
In hys epytelis that ben ful olde  
What shold I telle hym sith they he told  
In yongthe he made of Ceyns of alien  
And sith he hath spoken of euertchon  
These nobil wyys & thys robol lours eek  
Who so that wol hys large volun seke  
Clepyd the sayntis lours of cupyd  
Ther may he see the large woundis wyde  
Of lucrece and of lylone tiste  
The syluerde of dydo for the fals Ence  
The trece of phylles for hys demophon  
The playnt of dyanere and of hermyon  
Of adryane and eke of ysiphyle  
The lurreyn ple stondyng in the see  
The dreynt standir for hys erro  
The trece of Elyne and eke the woo

## The man of Laibes Prologe

Of Briseyde and of Ladoinea  
The cruelte of the quene medea  
The lpyt chyldeyn hangyng by the hals  
For thy Jason that was of loue so fale  
Eppymptea Penelope and alaste  
Your wyfshode comendynge wyth the beste  
Bot certaynly no word ne writith he  
Of that wicked ensaumppel of canace  
That loued her olben brother synfully  
Of whiche cursid stories I say fy  
O: ellis of Tius apolomus  
Holt that the cursid kyng antiochus  
Beraft his daughter of hyr maydenhode  
That is so horrible a tale for to rede  
Whyn he hre threlb vp on the pament  
And therfore he ful of aysement  
Wolde neuer wyte in none of hys sermons  
Of suche vnkynde abhymynacions  
Ne I wol none teltre yf that I may  
But of my tale what sholde I do thys day  
Me were ful both he sikned doulles  
To mysse that men clpe pierides  
Methamorphoseos boot what I mene  
But netheles I recke not a bene  
Then I come aftyre hym wyth halbe y luke  
I speke in prose & let hym rymes make  
And wyth that word he wyth a sobyr chere  
Began hys tale as ye shul aftyre here

Here endeth the prologue/ and begynneth  
the tale of the man of laibe

## The man of la Wyse tale



**O** hateful harm condicion of pouert  
 Wyth thrist/cold? & hunger so confoundyd?  
 To asken help the shameth in thy hert  
 Yf thou non aske with nede art þ so woundid?  
 That bery nede vnbrapith al thy woundis hid?  
 Magre thyn hed? thou muste for indigence  
 Or steke or legge or forow thyn dyspence

Thou blampst crist and? sayst ful bytterly  
 He mys departyth riches temporal  
 Thyng neyghebour thou wiltist synfully  
 And? sayst thou hast to lye and? he hath al  
 Parfay sayst thou somtyme he taken shal  
 When that hys tayl shal brenne in the gleden  
 For he not helpyth the nedful in her nede

Herke what is the sentence of the wyse  
 Bet is to dreen than to haue indigence

## The man of La Byes tale

Thy self neyghbour wol the despyse  
If thou be your farewel thy reuerence  
Yet of the byseman take thy sentence  
That al the dayes of your men ben bycke  
Welbaar therfor or thou come to the pryke

If thou be your thy brother hityth the  
And alle thy frendes fle fro the alas  
O rich marchauntis ful of wele ye be  
O nobyl o prudent folk as in thys mas  
Your baggis be not fylld with ambros aas  
But spe synk that rennyth in your chaunce  
At Eastemasse mery molbe ye daunce

Ye sekyn sonde and see for your bynnyngis  
And as byse folk ye knowe al the state  
Of regnes ye even fadyr of tidnyngis  
And take both of wees and of deuat  
I were right nob of a tale desolaat  
Here that a marchaunt gon is many a yere  
Me taughte a tale the which that ye shal here

**I**n Surry whylom dwellid a compaigne  
Of chymen rich & ther to sad & trelve  
That byde wher senten theyr spiarpe  
Bothis of gold & latyn rich of silve  
Her chaffare was so trusty and so ne lye  
That euery byght hath deyn to chaffare  
With hem and eke to sellen her hem ware

Nobyl fol it that the maysteris of the sort  
Hauē shapen hem to Rome for to wende  
Were it for chympanhoo or for disport  
None oþyr message wold they thider sende  
But cam hem self to Rome this is the ende  
And in such place as thought hem advantage  
For her entent they taken her herbygage

## The man of lawys tale

Soiozned? haue thys marchantis in that toun  
A certeyn tyme as fyl for her plesaunce  
But so befyl that the excellent renoun  
Of the Emperours doughter dame Constance  
Reported? was wyth euery circumstaunce  
Onto thys surtiens marchantis in such wyse  
Fro day to day as I shal you deuyse

Thys was the comyn boye of euery man  
Our Emperour of Fome gods hym see  
A doughter hath that sith the world? began  
To rekene as wel her goodnes as her beaute  
Was neuer such another as was she  
I pray to god? in honour her susteyne  
And? wold? she were of al Europe the quene

In here is hygh beaute wythoute pryde  
Pongthe wythoute greif or folpe  
To al her werkis vertu is her gyde  
Humbles hath slayn in her al tyrannye  
She is a myrtour of alle curtesye  
Her herte is berry chambyr of holynesse  
Her hond? mynyster of freedom for almesse

And? al thys boye is soth as god? is trew  
Wat nold? to purpos let vs turne agayn  
Thise marchantis haue do fraught her shippis new  
And? when they haue the blissful mayde seyn  
Home to surry ten they wente ageyn  
And? don her nedis as they shal do yore  
And? such in wele I can sey no more

Nold? fyl it y thys marchantis stood? in grace  
Of hym that was the solboden of surrye  
For when y they come fro any strauinge place  
He wold? hym self of his kempgne curtesye  
Make hem good? chere and? bysely aspye  
Tidyingis of sundry regnyis forto lere

## The man of salwe tale

The wonderis that they myght se or here

Amonge othyr thyngis specially  
Thise marchants haue told; of dame Eustalie  
So gret noblesse in earnest seriously  
That this soldan hath caught so gret plesaunce  
To haue her figure in hys remembraunce  
That al hys lust and; al hys lesy cure  
Was forto beue here whilis hys lyf may dure

Parauenture in that large booke  
Wher men clepe the heuen y wynter booke  
Wyth sterres or that be hys byrthe booke  
That he for loue shold; haue hys deth allas  
For in the sterres clerer than is the glas  
Is wyrtyn god; boote who so coude it rede  
The deth of euery man wythouten drede

In sterres many a wynter there befor  
Was wyrt the deth of Hector and; achylles  
Of pompey Julius or they were born  
The scrif of Elkes and; of hercules  
Of Sampson turnus and; socrates  
The deth but mennys wyrtis be so dul  
That no wyght can rede it atte ful

Thys soldan for hys pryuy counail sent  
And; shortly on thys mater forto passe  
He hath to hem declared; hys entent  
And said hem certeyn but he myght haue grace  
To haue Eustiaunce wyth in a lytil space  
He nas but ded; & charged; hem on hys  
To shapen for hym sum remedye

Dyuers men dyuers thynges sayden  
They argumentis casten vp and; down  
Many a sotyl reson forth they layden  
They speak of magyk and; abusion

## The man of lawes tale

But fynally as in thys conclusion  
They can not see in that none auantage  
Ne in none othyr lyei saue in mariage

Thenne salbe they ther ynne such difficulte  
By way of reson to speke al playn  
By cause that ther was such dyuersite  
Betwix her bothe lawes that they sayn  
They trowe that no crysten pryncce wolde sayn  
Wedden his chyldr vnder our lawes swete  
That he was taught by mahoundr our ppheete

And he answerd hem rather than I lese  
Eustaunce I wol be crystenedr doubtles  
I moot be frys I may none other chise  
I pray you holdr your argumentis in pces  
Saupth my lyf and he not recyles  
To geten here that hath my lyf in cure  
For in thys woo I may not longe endure

What nedyth gretter dylatacion  
I say by trectyse andr enbassetys  
Andr by the popis medecoun  
Andr al the chyrche andr al the chynualtys  
That in destruction of malmetys  
Andr in entrees of crystis lawe were  
They be accorded so as ye shul here

Hold that the Solddan andr his baronage  
Andr alle his liegis shul crystenedr be  
Andr he shal haue Eustaunce in mariage  
Andr certeyn goldr I not what quantyt  
Andr ther to founde they sufficient summe  
The same accorde was sworn in eyther side  
Now sayre Eustaunce almyghty godr the gyde

Now holdr sum men bene as I gesse  
That I sholdr telle al the purueaunce

## The man of lawys tale

That the emperour of hys grete noblesse  
Hath shapen for hys doughter dame Eustaunce  
Wel may men knowe that so grete ordinaunce  
May noman telle in a lytyl clause  
As was arayed for so hygh a cause

Byschoppis ben shapen wyth her forto wende  
Lordis ladyes knyghtes of grete renown  
And other folk ynough this is the ende  
And notified is thorough out the toun  
That euery wyght wyth grete deuocioun  
Sholde praye cryst that he this mariage  
Resceyue in grete and speede this wyage

The day is come of hys departynge  
I say the woful day fatal is come  
That there may be no lenger tarrynge  
But forwarde they dresse hem alle and som  
Eustaunce that was wyth sorow al ouercom  
Ful pale arisith and dresith her to wende  
For wel she woot ther is none other ende

Allas what wonder it is though she wepte  
That shal be sent to straunge nacion  
Fro frendis that were so tenderly kepte  
And to be bounde vnder subiection  
Of one she knoweth not the condicion  
Husbondis been alle good and haue be pore  
That knowe wyys I dar say nomore

Fader she sayd thy wretchyd chylde Eustaunce  
Thy yonge doughter fosterd by so soft  
And be my moder my souerayn plesaunce  
Ouer all thyng out take crist one koste  
Eustaunce your chylde her recomaundith ofte  
Vnto your grace for I shal to surreye  
Ne shal I neuer see you more wyth eye

## The man of la Bees tale

Allas Vnto the barbarish nacion  
I muste anon spech that is your lyll  
But cryst that dyed for our redemption  
So geue me gra & hys bestis to fulfille  
I wretchid womman no fors though I spille  
Wommen are born to thraldom & penaunce  
And to be vnder manns gouernaunce

I trow at trope lban turnus hie the wal  
Of ilion nor brent was thes the cyte  
He at Rome for the harme thurgh hanpall  
I hat Romayne hadde benquysshid tymes thre  
Has herd such tender wepyng for pyte  
As was in the chambyr for her departynce  
But forth she moot wether she wepe or synge

O fyrst moeyng cruel fymament  
Wyth thy dyurnal swegh that coldest ay  
And hurtle al fro este to occidente  
That naturelly wolde holde another wep  
Thy crolldyng set the heuen in such aray  
At the begynnyng of this fiero viage  
That cruel mars hath slayn this marriage

O infortunat ascendant tortuous  
Of whype the lord is helplee falle alas  
Out of hys angle in to the thyrde hous  
O mars O ocatafer as in thys caas  
O felle mone vnhappy be thy paas  
Thou knettist the there thou art not resceyued  
There thou were wel fro thens art þe weyued

Imprudent Emperour of Rome alas  
Was there no phylosophyr in thy towne  
Is no tyme better than another in thys caas  
Of viages is ther none election  
Namely to folk of hygh condicion  
Not lban a fote is of a birthe y knolde

## The man of lawys tale

Alas we been to selld; and; ellis to folwe

To shipe is brought this woful fayre mayde  
Solempnly with euery circumstance  
Nolb Ihesu cryst be wyth you as she sayd;  
Ther is nomore but fare wel fayre Eustance  
She payneth her self to make good; contenaunce  
And; forth I lette here saylle in thys manere  
And; turne aghen I wol to my matere

The moder of the solddan welke of Byas  
Aspyed; hath her sonys playn entent  
Holt he wolde lette hys olde sacryfias  
And; right anon she for her counsel sent  
And; they come to knolbe what she ment  
And; whan assemblyd; was thys folk in fere  
She sette her down & sayde as ye shul here

Lordynges quod; she ye knolbe wel euerychon  
Holt that my sone is in poynt forth to lette  
The holy lawys of our alcaron  
Peuen by goddis messenger Machomete  
But on a volbe to the grete god; I sette  
The lyf shal fathyr out of my body stert  
O; machometis lawbe go out of my hert

What shold; be tidyn of thys nelbe lawbe  
But thraldom to our body and; penaunce  
And; astirward; in helle to be dralbe  
For we reneyed; Mahound; our creaunce  
But lordis wyl ye make assuraunce  
As I shal say assentynge to my lore  
And; I shal make be sauf for euermore

They sworyn and; assented; euery man  
To lyue wyth hir and; dye and; by hyr stonde  
And; eueryche in the best wyse that he can  
To strengthe her shal his frendis fonde

## The man of lawes tale

As she that hath this empyre take on hand  
Wherpe ye shul here as I shal deuyse  
And to hym alle six spak in this wyse

We shul be first fayne to ascende to take  
Cold water ne shal be geue but a lyte  
And I shal suke a fesse and a reuel make  
That as I trow I shal the soldoun quyte  
For though his wyf be cristenid neuer so white  
She shal haue nede to washe alway the rede  
Though she a font ful of water wyth her lede

O soldounes Fote of iniquyte  
Wyago thou samarian the secunde  
O serpent vndyr femynnyte  
Yll vnto the serpent depe in hille y bounde  
O feyned woman alle that may confounde  
Werte and Innocence thurgh thy malice  
Y bred is in the as nest of euery vice

O Sathan enuyous syn that day  
That thou were chady from our heritage  
Wel knowest thou to women the olde way  
Thou madest eu a to brynge be in seruage  
Thou wolt fordon this Cristen mariage  
Thyn instrument so wel alway the whyle  
Makyst thou of women whan y wylt begyle

This soldounesse whome I thus blame & berp  
Let pryncely her counsel go her way  
What shold I lenger in this tale tary  
She rydyth to the Soldan on a day  
And sayd to hym that she wolde reue her lay  
And ascende of prestis hand fonge  
Repentyng her that she hathen was so longe

Besechyng hym to do her that honour  
That she myght haue the cristen folk to feste

## The man of lawys tale

To plesen hem I wyll do my labour  
The Solddan saith I wyll do at your herte  
Ande knelyng thankyde her of that requeste  
So glady he was he myghte what to sey  
She kyssyd her sone & home she goth her wey

Arvydyd he thys crysten folk to bonde  
In surry wyth a greet solempne Foute  
Ande hastily thys Solddon sente hys sonde  
Fyrst to hys moder & to al the regne aboute  
Ande said his wyf was come without doute  
Ande preyde her to ryde ayens the quene  
The honour of hys regne to sustene

Greet was the preece & riche was the aray  
Of surpys and of Pomeyns met in fere  
The moder of the solddon ryde and gay  
Rescepyth her wyth al glady chere  
As ony moder myght her doughter dere  
Ande to the next cyte there beside  
A softe paas solempnly they ryde

Nought trolb I the triumphe of Julius  
Of whych that Lucan makith such a booste  
Was ryaller ne more curiouse  
Than was the assemble of thys blissful hoost  
But thys scorpion thys wicked goose  
The solddonneffe for al her flatteryng  
Cast vnder thys ful mortally to seynge

The solddon comyth hym self sone aftyr thys  
So ryally that wonder was to telle  
Ande welcomyth her wyth joye ande blis  
Ande thus in joye ande blis I lete hem dwelle  
The faunt of enery tale is forto telle  
Men thoughte it when tyme cam for the best  
That reuel to synt ande men to go to rest

## The man of la Wye tale

The tyme cam thys olde Solddonnesse  
Ordeyned hath this feste of Whyppe I tolde  
And to the feste crysten men dresse  
In general bothe yonge and olde  
There may men rialte and feste beholde  
And deyntees mo than I can deuyse  
But al to dre they boughte it er they ryse

O fodeyn wo that euer art successour  
To wordly blis spreynt wyth bitternes  
The ende of the Joye & of our wordly labour  
Wo occuppeth the syn of our gladnesse  
Herken thys counsel for thy sikernesse  
Op on thy glady day haue in thy mynde  
The Unlbaar wo that comyth the behynde

For shortly to telle at o word  
The solddan and the cristen euerichone  
Ween al to helven and seikedy at the worde  
But it were only dame Eustaunce allone  
This olde Solddonnes cursid crone  
Hath with her frendis there don this cursid dede  
For she her self wolde al the contrie lede

Ne there was Surreyn none y was conuertid  
That of the counsel of the Solddan wote  
That he nas al to helven or he avertid  
And Eustaunce haue takyn anon foot hoot  
And in a shyp steerles god it woot  
They haue her set and bid her lerne to saylle  
Out of Surreye agaynward in to Jtaye

A certeyn tresour that she thider ledde  
And soth to sayn Vitayle greet plente  
They haue her peue and clothis eek she had  
And forth she sayled in to the salt se  
O my Eustaunce ful of benygnyte  
O Emperours yonge doughter dre

## The man of Laibes tale

He that is lord oure fortune be thy steere

She blisfuld hyr andr lyth ful pyuous boys  
Vnto the croos of cryst thus sayd she  
O clere O weleful auter holy croys  
Rede of the lambis blood ful of pyte  
That wessheth the world fro oldr iniquyte  
Me fro the fendr andr fro hys clalys kepe  
That day that I shal drench in the depe

Victorious tre of protection trelbe  
That only were worthy for to here  
The kyng of heuen lyth hys boundis nelbe  
The whyte lamb that hurt was lyth a spere  
Jflemex of fendis out of hym andr of here  
Of whyche thy lynys feythfully extende  
Me kepe andr geue me my lyf tamende

Peris andr dayes fleet thys creature  
Throld out the see of grek in to the strayte  
Of Marrok as it was her auenture  
O many a fory meel may she buyte  
Aftyr her deth ful ofte may she wayte  
Or that the wylde walbes wolde her dryue  
Vnto the place where that she shal aryue

Men myghte aske why she was not slayn  
Eke at the feste who myghte her body saue  
Andr I answerd to that demaunde agayn  
Who sayd Danyel in the horrible Caue  
There euery wyght were he mayster or knaue  
Was lyth the spoun fret or he a stert  
No wyght but god that she was in her sert

God lyst to selbe hys wondrous myracle  
In here for we shold see hys myghty werkis  
Crise that is of euery harm tryacle  
We certayn menys as knolben clerkis

## The man of lawys tale

Doth thyngis that for certeyn ende ful derk is  
To mannyngs lyt that for our Ignoraunce  
He can not knowe his prudent purueaunce

How sith that she nas at the feste y stalbe  
Who kepte her fro drenchyng in the see  
Who kepte Jonas in the fischis malbe  
Tyl he was spolyt out at nyngue  
Wel may men knowe it was no wight but he  
That kepte the peple hebrayke fro drenchyng  
Wyth drye foot thorough out the see passenge

Who hath the four spiritis of tempeste  
That wolde haue to annoyen lond and see  
Both the North and south west and Est  
Annoyeth neyther lond nor hous ne tre  
Sothly the comaunder of that was he  
That fro the tempeste ay this woman kepte  
As wel when she wook as when she slepte

Where myght this woman mete & drynk haue  
Thre yere & more lastyng her bytaryll  
Who fedde the Egiptian mary in the Caue  
Or in desert not but aise sauns faylle  
Fyue thousand folk it was as gret meruaill  
Wyth souys fyue and fischis also to fede  
God sente his forson at her gret nede

She dryueth forth in to our ocean  
Therold out our wyld see tyl at the laste  
Wondyr an hold that nempne I ne can  
Fer in Northumbryl and the wallys her cast  
And in the sond the shyp stichyd so faste  
That thens wolde it not alle that tyme  
The wyll of Crist was there she shuld abyde

The constabyl of the castel down is fare  
To se this wraake & alle the shyp he soughte

## The man of Ladys tale

And fondr thys lbery womman ful of care  
Wher fondr also the tresour that she broughte  
In her langage mercy she besoughte  
The lyf out her body for to thynne  
Her to deliuer out of þe wo that she was ynne

A maner latyn corrupt was her speche  
But algatis ther by was she vnderstonde  
The constabyl whan hym lyst no longer seeche  
Thys woful womman broughte he to bonde  
She knelith down and thankyth cristis sonde  
But what she was she wolde to noman seye  
For foul ne fayr though she sholdr deye

She saydr she was so masid in the see  
That she forgot her mynde by her trolbth  
The Constabyl hath of her so gret pyte  
And eke his wyf that wepen sore for trolbth  
She was so diligent wythout scholthe  
To serue and please euerych in that place  
That al her loue that lokyn in her face

The constabyl and dame hermegyldr hys wyf  
Were paynemes and that contre euery where  
But hermegyldr louedr her ryght as her lyf  
And Custaunce hath so longe y seournedr there  
In orysoun wyth many a bitter tere  
Eyl ihesus hath conuertedr thorough his grace  
Dame hermegild the Estableste of that place

In al that bondr no cristen durste rouse  
Alle cristen men be fledr fro that contre  
Thorough paynemes that conqueredr al aboute  
The Fopame as wel by bondr as by see  
To wales thenne fledde the Cristianite  
Of oldr Britons dwellynge in that yle  
The was no refute for the mene whyle

## The man of lawys tale

But yet nere crysten byrons so exiled  
That there nare som in her pryuyte  
Honourid crist & lethen folk begiled  
And nygh the castel such there dwelled thre  
That one of hem was blynd & myght not se  
But it were wyth thycke eyen of hys mynde  
Wyth whiche they seen after men be blynde

Bryght was the sonne as in somers day  
For whiche the constabyl and hys wyf also  
And Eustaunce hath take the ryght way  
Toward the see a furlonge wey or thre  
To pleyen and to comen to and fro  
And in thys walk the blynde man they mette  
Crosyd and olde wyth eyen faste y sette

In the name of crist cride thys briden  
Dame hermegylde yeue me my sighte ageyn  
Thys lady way asayd of that foun  
Lest that her husbond shortly for to seyn  
Wolde here for Ihesus cristis lore haue sleyn  
Tyl Eustaunce made her holde & bid her wiche  
The wyf of cryste as daughter of holy chyrche

The Constabyl wente abussyd of that sighte  
And sayd what amountyth al thys fare  
Eustaunce answerd sire it is cristis myght  
That helppyth folk out of the fendis snare  
And so for forth she gan our salve declare  
That she the Constable or it were eue  
Conuerted hath & on cryste made hym beleue

This Constable was nothyng lord of this place  
Of whiche I spak ther he Eustaunce fonde  
But kepte it strongly many wynter space  
Wondyr alla kyngs of al Northumbreland  
That was ful wyse and worthy of hys bond  
A pens the scottis as men may wel here

## The may of Ladies tale

But turne agayn I wyll to my matere

Sathan that curd so wyrtith to begyle  
Saw of Eustaunce all the perfection  
And caste arich holl he myghte quyte her while  
And made a yong knyght dwellyng in þe town  
Loue here so hote of foul affection  
That deely hym thoughte he shal spille  
But he of here onys myghte haue hys wyll

He wolwyth her but it auaylyth nought  
He wolde do no synne by no wey  
And for despit he compassid in hys thought  
To make her on shamesul deth to dey  
He wyrtith whan the constabyl is alwey  
And pruely on a nyght he crept  
In hermegildis chambyr whilis she slept

Wery forbakid in her orisons  
Slepyth hermegilde and Eustaunce also  
Thys knyght thorough Sathans temptacions  
Al softly is to the bed y goo  
And kute the throte of hermegild a flou  
And leyde the bloody knyf by dame Eustaunce  
And wet his wey ther god geue him mischaunce

Sone after comyth the Constabyl home ageyn  
And eke alla that was kynge of the lond  
And saw hys wyf dyspitously sleyn  
For whome he wepte and wronge hys hond  
And in the bed the bloody knyf he fonde  
Whan Eustaunce alas what myghte she say  
For betray wo her wyf was alle alway

To kynge alla was told al thys myschaunce  
And the tyme & wher and eke the wyse  
That in a ship was founde this Eustaunce  
As here before ye me haue herd deuyse

## The man of lawys tale

The kyngis herte of pyte gan aryse  
When he saw the kerygne creature  
Falle in dysse and in mysaventure

For as the lomb towward his deth is brought  
So stant this innocent afore the kyng  
This fals knyght þat hath this treson wrought  
Wereth hyr in honur for hath do this thyng  
But natheles there was grette mornyng  
Amonge the peple & sayden they can not gesse  
That she hadde not do so gret a wickednesse

For they haue sepe here euere so vertuous  
And bouyng hermeysyd right as her lye  
Of thise two witnesse euerych in that hous  
Sawe he that shold hermeysyd wyth the knyght  
This gentyl kyng hath caught a gret motyf  
Of this witnesse & thought he wolde enquire  
Deperre in this caas & trolthe forto lere

Allas Eustace thou hast no champion  
Ne fighte cans thou not so wel allay  
But he that starf for our redemption  
Wondur Sathan and yet liff there he lay  
He be the stronge champion this day  
For but yf crist open myracle liffhe  
Wythoute gylt thou shalt be slayn as swithe

She sette hir down on her knees & thus she said  
Immortal god that sauedyst susanne  
Fro fals blame and thou merciful mayde  
Mary I mene doughtir of saynt anne  
Before whos chylde aungelis synge osanne  
If I be gyltles of this felonye  
My socour be or ellis I shal dye

Haue ye not se sumtyme a pale face  
Amonge a prees of hym that hath he lade

## The man of Laues tale

Towrde hys deeth wher he getyth no grace  
Ande such a colour in hys face he had  
Men myght knowe hys face that was he sead  
Amonge all the faces in that Route  
So stant Eustauxe ande lokyth hre aboute

O quenes spyunge whylom in prosperyte  
Duchesse ande ye ladyes euerychone  
Haue some wylthe on hys aduersite  
An Emperours doughter stont allone  
He woot not to whome to make hre mone  
O bloody ryal that stondyst in thys drede  
For ken thy frendes at thy greet nede

Thys alla kyng hath such compassion  
As gentyl herte is fulfild of pyte  
That from hys eyen ran the watyr down  
Holt he felt goo fet a booke quod he  
And of this knyght wol sware that he  
Hath thys woman slayn yet wil be vs awys  
Wym that be wyl shal be our Justys

A bryton booke wryten wyth euangelies  
Was fet ande there on he siboore anon  
He gylty was ande in the mene whyles  
An hond hym smoot vp on the necke soon  
That down he fyl at onys as a stoon  
Ande so he hys eyen brest out of hys face  
In sight of euery body in that place

A Boye was herd in general audiance  
Ande sayd thou hast disclaundrid aplilees  
Thy doughter of holy chyrche in hygh presence  
Thys hast thou doon ande yet I holde my pees  
Of thys meruayll agast was al the pees  
As masid folk they stonden euerychon  
For drede of wrecche saue Eustauxe alone

## The man of lawys tale

Grete was the drede ande eke the repentance  
Of hem that hadde wronge suspicion  
Wy on thys sely Innocente Custaunce  
Ande for thys myrakyl in conclusion  
Ande by Custaunces mediacion  
The kyng ande many another in that place  
Conuertid was thankid be cristis grace

This fals knyght was slayn for his Vntrouth  
By iugement of the kyng alle hastily  
And yet hath Custaunce of his deeth grete route  
Ande aftyr thys Ihesus of hys mercy  
Made alle to wedden ful solempnly  
Thys holy mayden that is so bright ande stene  
Ande thus hath crist maad Custaunce a quene

But who was woful ys I schal nat say  
Of thys weddyng but donygelde ande noma  
The kyngis modir ful of tyrannye  
Her thoughte her cursid herte brast a wo  
She nolde not her sone hadde do soo  
Her thoughte a despyt that he shold take  
So straunge a creature vnto hys make

Me lyst not of the chaf ne of the fere  
Make so longe a tale as of the corn  
What shold I telle of the ryalte  
Of thys maryage or whyppe cours goth beforen  
Who sholbeth in a trompe or who in a horn  
They fruyt of euery tale is for to sey  
They ete ande draunke daunce synge ande pley

They go to bedde as it is skyl ande ryght  
For though that whyppe be ful holy thyngis  
They must take in pryncent a nyght  
Suche maner necessaryes as been vlesyngis  
To folk that haue weddyd hem wyth ryngis  
Ande ley a lytel her holynesse a syde

## The man of lawes tale

As for the tyme it may none other betyde

On hert he begate a man chylde anon  
And to a bysshop and to hys constable eke  
He took hys wyf to kepe when he is gon  
To scotland ward hys fomen for to seke  
Nolw fayre Eustace that is so humble & meke  
So long is gon wyth chylde in that synlle  
She kepte her chambyr abydyng crises wyll

The tyme is come a man chylde she ber  
Mauriaus at the fontstoon they hym calle  
Thys Constabyl doth forth come a messenger  
And broot vnto this kyng þe clepid was alle  
How that this blissful tydyng is to fulle  
And othir thyng which was needful to sape  
He takith his lettre & forth he goth his waye

Thys messenger to do hys auantage  
Vnto the kynges moder ridyth he swythe  
And salueth her fayre in hys langage  
Madame quod he ye may be glady and blythe  
And thanken god an hundrid thousand sithe  
My lady þe quene hath chylde wythouten doute  
To joye and blisse of al thys regne aboute

So her the lettres seald of thys thyng  
That I muste here in al the haste I may  
If ye wyl ought to your sone the kyng  
I am your seruaunt bothe nyght and day  
Donegelde answerd as nolw at this tyme nay  
But here al nyght I wol thou take thy rest  
To morow I wol seyn the what me leste

Thys messenger drank sadly ale and wyne  
And stolen were hys lettres pryuelly  
Out of hys box whyle he slepte as a swyn  
And countrefetid was ful subtilly

## The man of la Bees tale

Anothyr lettre brought ful synfully  
Onto the kyngz dyrectyd of thys matere  
Fro hys constabyl as ye may after here

The lettre spak thz quene delpyeredz was  
Of so horryble a fendly creature  
That in the castel none so hardy was  
There no wyhple ony wyghth myght endure  
The modyr was an elpe by auenture  
Y comyn by charmes or by sorcerye  
Andy euery wyghth hateth her compagne

Wo was the kyng whan he this lettre had seen  
But to no wyghth he toldz hys sorowfuls fore  
But of hys olben hondz he broot apen  
Welcome the sonde of cryst for euermore  
To me that am nelbe lernedz in thys fore  
Lordz welcome be thy lust & thy pleasaunce  
My lust I put al in thy ordenaunce

Kepe thys chylde al be it foul or fayr  
And eke my wyf vnto myn hoome comynge  
Crise whan hym lyst may sende me an hys  
More agreabyll than thys to my lykynge  
Thys lettre he selpyth pryuelly wepyng  
Whych to the messenger was y take sone  
Andy forth he goth there is nomore to doon

O messenger fulfylldez wyth dronkenes  
Straunge is thy bryeth thy lymys flateryn ap  
Andy thou beltrepest al secretnes  
Thy mynde is sore thou iangelist as a jay  
Thy face is turnedz as in a nelbe aray  
There dronkenesse reygneeth in ony wylde  
There is no counsel kepte it is no doute

O donegilde I haue none englysh dygne  
Onto thy malys andy thy tyranny

## The man of lawes tale

And therefore to the feend I the signe  
Let hym endytyn of thy trewtyr  
By mannysshe by O nay by god I by  
By feendly spirit for I dar wel telle  
Though thou here walke thy spirit is in helle

Thys messenger comyth fro the kyng agayn  
And at the kyngis modris court he lighte  
And sir was of thys messenger ful fayn  
And plesid hym in all that euer he myghte  
He drank and wel hys gyrdyl vnder pyghte  
He slepyth and he snortyth in hys gyse  
Al nyght tyl the sonne gan aryse

Aftyr were hys lettres stoken euerychon  
And countrefetid lettres in thys wyse  
The kyng comaundith his Constabyl anon  
Wp payne of hongynge & on high iuyse  
That he ne shold suffre in no wyse  
Custaunce in hys regne forto abyde  
Thre dayes and a quartyr of a tyde

But in the same shyp as he here fond  
Hert and her yonge sone and al her geer  
He shold put and croude fro the lond  
And charge hyr that she come neuer eft there  
O my Custaunce wel may thy ghost haue fear  
And slepyng in thy dreame by penaunce  
Whan donegete castyth al thys ordenaunce

Thys messenger on morow whan he book  
Wnto the Castel holdyth the next way  
And vnto the constabyl he the lettris took  
And whan that he thys pitous lettre say  
Ful often he sayde alas and wel alway  
Lord! wist quod he hou may this world endure  
So ful of synne is many a creature

## The man of la Bees tale

O myghty god: yf that it be thy wyll  
Synthen thou art rightful Juge how may it be  
That thou wolt suffre innocen to spylle  
And wicked folk regne in prosperite  
O good Eustaunce alas so wo is me  
That I moot be thy turmentour or ellis deye  
On shamful deth ther is none other weye

Weppyn bothe olde and yonge in that place  
Whan that the kynge thys cursyd lettre sent  
And Eustaunce wyth a dedly pall face  
The wyfe towarde the shyp she went  
But neuer the lees she takith in good entent  
The wyf of cryst and knelyng on the stronde  
She sayd ay welcome be thy sonde

He that me kepte fro the fals blame  
Whilis that I was on the land amonges you  
He can me kepe fro harne and eke fro shame  
In the salt see al though ye se not hou  
As stronge as euer he was he is yet now  
In hym I truste and in hys moder dere  
That is to me my sayl and eke my ster

Her lytyl chyld lay wepyng in her arm  
And knelyng pytously to hym she sayd  
O my lytyl chyld I wol do the none harm  
With that the kercheyf from her hed she brayde  
And ouer hys lytyl eyen she it layde  
And in her arm she lullyth it ful faste  
And in to heuene vp her eyen she caste

Moder quod she and mayde bryght marpe  
Soth is that therowb womannes egement  
Mankynde was lost & dampnyd euer to dye  
For which thy child was on the cros to rent  
Thy blyssful eyen salw al thys turment  
Than is there no comparson betwene

## The man of lawes tale

Thyn wo & ony wo that man may susceyne

Thou salb thy chylde slayn a fore thyn e yen  
And yet nolv lyueth my lytyl chylde per say  
Nolv lady bryght to whom all full arien  
Thou ghorpe of whomanhed thou fayre may  
Thou haue of refut bryght sterre of day  
Relbe on my chylde that of thy gentylnesse  
Relbest on euery rebfull in dystresse

O lytyl chylde alas what is thy gylt  
That neuer broughtest synne as yet perde  
Why wyll thy hard fader haue the spylt  
O mercy and dere Constabyl quod she  
As leet my lytyl chylde dwelle here with the  
And yf thou darst not saue hym fro blame  
So kys hym onys in hys fadres name

Therbyth she wolth backward to the bond  
And sayd fare wel husbond wouthlees  
And by she ryst & walkeyth down the stonde  
Tolward her shyp here folowith alle the prees  
And eue she prayeth her child to hold his pees  
And takyth her leue wyth an holy entent  
She blispyth her & in to the ship she went

Wythayld was the shyp it is no drede  
Habundauntly for her longe space  
And othyr nea sharyes that sholde nede  
She hadde ynow heryed by goddis grace  
For wynd & wedyr almyghty god purchas  
And bryng her hom I can no better sey  
But in the see she depucth forth the wey

**A**lla the kyng cometh sone after thys  
Onto hys Castel of Wyke I tolde  
And askid where his wif & his child is  
The Constabyl gan aboute hys hert to colde

## The man of lawes tale

And pleyntly al the maner he hym tolde  
As ye haue herd; I can it telle no better  
And shewith the kyngis seel and hys letter

And sayde lord; as ye comaundyde me  
On payne of deth so haue I do certeyn  
Thys messenger turmentyd; was tyl he  
Must be knowe and telle plat and playn  
fro nyght to nyght what place he had in layn  
And thus he wyth subtil enqueryng  
Imagened was by whō this harm gan spryng

The bond; was knowen that the letter broot  
And al the benygn of thys cursyd; dede  
But in what wyse certeynly I not  
The effect is thys that alla out of drede  
His moder slough that men may playnly rede  
For that sly traytour was to her ligeaunce  
Thus endyd; olde donegely wyth myschaunce

The sorow that thys alla nyght and; day  
Makyth for hys wyf and; for hys chylde; also  
There is no tonge that it telle may  
But now wol I to Eustaunce go  
That fletith in the see wyth payne and; wo  
I yue peer and; more as skyp; cristis sonde  
Or that her shyp approchyd; to ony bonde

Under an lathen castel at the laste  
The wyfche the name not in my tyt I fynde  
Eustaunce and; eke hys chylde; the see vp caste  
Almyghty god; that saued; al man kynde  
Haue on Eustaunce & her chylde; some mynde  
That fallen is in lathen bond; eftson  
In point to spelle as I shal telle you sone

Down fro þe Castel comyth there many a wight  
To gauryn on thys shyp and; on Eustaunce

## The man of lawys tale

But shortly fro the castel on a nyght  
The lordis Schalbard godys hym myschaunce  
A theef that hadde reyned our creance  
Come in to the shyp allone and sayde he sholde  
Hys lemmyn be whether she wolde or nolde

Thy was thys wretchyd womman wo be gon  
Her chyldre cryde and she cryde pytously  
But blessed mary help her ryght anon  
For wyth her strogelyngs wel and myghedly  
The theef fyl ouer the bord alle sodenly  
And in the see he dreynt for vengeaunce  
And thus hath crist Unbemyd kept custaunce

O foul lust of luxurys to thyng ende  
Not only that thou feyntist mannys mynde  
But verily thou wolt hys body stonde  
Thende of thy werk or of thy lustis blynde  
Is copleynyng hou many on may men fynde  
That nought for werk sumtyme but for thentent  
To do thyne synne be othyr sleyn or sent

Holb may this weck wōman haue þ strength  
Here to defende ayens the renegat  
O Goliath Unmesurable of lengthe  
Holb myght Dauid make the so mate  
So ponge of armure and so desolate  
Holb durste he lōke vp on thy face  
Wel may men see it is but goddis grace

Who pas Judyth corage or hardynesse  
To sle hym Olofernes in hys tent  
And to delyuere out of wretchydnesse  
The peple of god I say to thys entent  
That ryght as godys spirit and bygour sent  
To hem and saued hem out of myschaunce  
So sente he strength & bygour vnto Custaunce

## The man of la Bee tale

Forth goth her ship thorow out þ natow mouth  
Of iulalter and septe dryuynge all day  
Some tyme west & some tyme north & south  
And some tyme est ful meny a lbery day  
Tyl Cristis moder y blissyd be she ay  
Hath shapen thorow her endlees goodnesse  
To make an ende of al her heuynesse

Nolw let be stynte of Eustaunce but a throlw  
And speke we of Fomayns the emperour  
That out of surrye hath be lettris knowe  
The slaughter of crysten folk and dyshonour  
Doon vnto hys doughter by a fals traytour  
I mene the cursyd and wyckedyd selldonnesse  
That at the feste leet she lothe more and lesse

For whych thys Emperour hath sent anon  
Hys senatour wyth real ordenaunce  
And othyr lordis godd boote many on  
On surryens to take hygh Vengeaunce  
They brenne & sle & brynge hem to myschaunce  
Ful many a day but shortly thys is the ende  
Dombard to Rome they shapen hem to bende

Thys senatour repayrith wyth bydory  
To Rome ward saylyng ful ryally  
And mette the ship dryuynge as sayth þ story  
In whych Eustaunce sit ful pytously  
No thyng knelw he what she was ne why  
She was in such aray that she nyl sey  
Of here astat though she shold dye

He bryngeth her to Rome to hys wyf  
He pay her to here and her yonge sone also  
And wyth the senatour she ladde hyr lyf  
Thus can our lady brynge out of wo  
Eustaunce and many another mo  
And longe tyme dwellyd she in that place

## The man of LaBes tale

In holy werkyes euer was her grace

The senatours wyf her aunte was  
But for all that she knelbe her neuer the more  
I wyll no longer tarye in thys cas  
But to kyngz Alla wyche I spak of pore  
For hys wyf wepyth andy sigfith sore  
I wol retorne andy lette I wol Eustaunce  
Vnder the senatours gouernaunce

Kyngz Alla wyche þ hadde his moder slayn  
Wp on a day fyl in such repentaunce  
Andy þf I shortly telle shal andy pleyne  
To Rome he cometh to receyue hys penaunce  
Andy put hym in the popis ordenaunce  
In hygh andy solbe andy Ihesus crist besoughte  
Forgeue his wickid workis þ he hath brought

The fame anone thorough Rome is born  
Holv alla kyng shal come a pylgremage  
By herkegeours that wenten hym befor  
For wyche the senatour as was the vsage  
Kood hym ayens andy many of hys lynage  
As wol to stelben hys magnyfyceunce  
As to doon any kyngz reuerence

Gret chere doth thys nobyl senatour  
To kyngz Alla andy he to hym also  
Euery of hem doth to other gret honour  
Andy so besyl that on a day or tibo  
Thys senatour is to kyngz alla go  
To feste shortly þf I shal not ly  
Eustaunces sone wente in hys company

Some men boldy say at þ request of Eustaunce  
Thys senatour hadde ledy thys chyldy to feste  
I may not telle euery Circumstaunce  
Be as he may there was he at the feste

## The man of lawys tale

But soth it is right at hys moder hys  
Besore alla duryng the mete space  
The chylde stood lokyng in the kyngis face

Alla the kyng of this child hath gret wonder  
And to the senatour he sayde anone  
Whos is this fayre child that stondyth ponder  
I not quod he by god and by saynt John  
A moder he hath but fader hath he noon  
That I of boote and shortly in a stounde  
He tolde alla how the chylde was founde

But god boote quod this senatour also  
So vertuous a creature in al my lyf  
He saith I neuer as she ne herde of me  
Of wordly bymynen mayden bydolour or byf  
I dar wel say she hidde kurer byth a knyf  
Thorow out her brest than be a woman byf  
There is noman coude bringe her to the pyf

How was this child as lyke unto Eustace  
As possible is a creature for to be  
This alla hath the face in remembraunce  
Of dame Eustace and theron muside he  
Yf that the childis moder were aught she  
That is hys byf & pryncely he sighte  
And spedde hym fro the tabyl that he myght

Charley quod he the fantom is in myn herte  
I ought to deme of rightful judgement  
That in the salt see my byf is dede  
And afterward he made hys argument  
What boote I yf crist haue hyr hyder sent  
My byf he see as wel as he her sent  
To my contrie fro thence that she went

And after anone from byth the senatour  
Goth alla for to se this wonder chaunce

## The man of Lawes tale

Thys senatour doth alla gret honour  
And hastily he sent after Eustaunce  
But trust wel her lust not to daunce  
Whan she wyfte wherfore was that sonda  
Wonne his wypon her feet myght she stonde

Whan alla salu hys wyf fayre he her greet  
And wepte that it was wouth to see  
For alle fershe loke that he on her sette  
He knew veryly that it was she  
And she for sorow as domb stondyth as a tre  
So was her herte shyt in her dysresse  
Whan she remembryd of hys unkyndnesse

Thys she wolowyd in hys owen sight  
He wepte and hym excusyd pytously  
Nob god quod he & al hys halows bryght  
So wyfly on my soule haue mercy  
That of your harme as gyltes am I  
As is my sone Mauryce so lyk your face  
Ellis the fend me fetch out of thys place

Fonge was the sobbyng & the hytter peyne  
Er that her woful herte myght see  
Gret was the pyte forto her hem pleyne  
Thoru whych pleyntis gan her wo encrece  
I pray you alle my labour to relece  
I may not telle her wo vntyl to morow  
I am so lery forto speke of sorow

But fynally whan the soth is wiste  
That alla gyltes is of hyr wo  
I trow an hundred tymes he they kyste  
And such a blisse is there betwix hem two  
That saue the ioye that lastyth euer mo  
Eter nyg noon y lik that ony creature  
Hath seyn or shal whyles the world may dure

## The man of lawes tale

Thy preyde she her husbonde mekely  
That in releef of her pynous payne  
That he wolde pray her fader sprecyally  
That of hys mageste he wolde enclayne  
To boucheauf Sunday with hym to dyne  
She prayeth hym eek he sholde by no wey  
Unto her fader no word of here sey

Some men wolde seyn that the child Maurice  
Doth this message vnto the Emperour  
But as I gesse alla was not so nyte  
To hym that is so souerayn of honour  
As he that is of cristis folk the flour  
Sente ony chylde but it is best to deme  
He wente hym self and so it may wel seme

Thys Emperour hath grauntid gentylly  
To come to dyner as he hym besoughte  
And wel I suppose he lokid hely  
Up on this child & on his daughter thoughte  
Alla goth vnto hys inne & as hym oughte  
Arayd for thys feste in euery wyse  
As ferforth as hys kunnyng may suffice

The morow am alla & gan by n dresse  
And eke his wyf this Emperour for to mete  
And forth they ryden in ioye and in gladnesse  
And when she salve her fader in the strete  
She lightith down and fallith hym to fete  
Fader quod she your yonge chylde Eustaunce  
Is now ful cleen out of your remembraunce

I am your daughter Eustaunce quod she  
That whylom ye haue sent in to surrye  
It am I fader that in the salt see  
Was put alone and dampned for to dye  
Now good fader mercy I you praye  
Send me nomore in to none bethenesse

## The man of Laues tale

But thankyth my lord here of hys kyndnesse

Who can the pytous Joye telle alle  
Betwix hem thre sithnes they be thus met  
But of my tale make an ende I shal  
The day goth faste I wyl no longer lette  
Thyse glady folk to dynner be y sette  
In Joye and blisse at mete I lette hym duelle  
A thousand fold wel more than I can telle

Thys chylde maurice was sith Emperour  
Y maad by the pope and byundy crystenly  
To cristis chyrche dede he gret honour  
But I lette al thys storie passe by  
Of Eustaunce is my tale speccally  
In olde Romannes gestes men may wel fynde  
Mauriceus lyf I here it not in mynde

Than kyngz alla wban he hys tyme say  
Wyth Eustaunce hys holy wyf so swete  
To engelande sen they come the ryght way  
Where as they lyuen in Joye and in quyet  
But lytyl whyle it lasted I you lette  
Joye of thys worlde but tyme wol not abyde  
Fro day to nyght it chaungyth as the tyde

Who lyueth euer in suche delyte a day  
That ne meuedy cyther in conscience  
Of ire or talent or some kynnyng affray  
Enuye or pryde or passioun or offence  
I ne ley but for the ende of thys sentence  
That lytyl whyle in Joye or plesaunce  
Lastyth the lyf of Alla wyth Eustaunce

For deeth that takyth of hys and solue his tente  
Wben passid was a yeer even as I gesse  
Out of thys world thys kyngz alla is went  
For whome Eustaunce hath ful gret hevynesse

## The marchauntes prologe

Now pray we to godd hys soule blesse  
And dame Eustauce fynally to say  
Toward the town of Rome goth hys way

To Rome is come this holy creature  
And fyndeth her frendis there hole and sound  
Now is she scapide al her auenture  
And when she hys fadyr hath y founde  
Down on her knees fallyth to grounde  
Weppynge in herte for tenderesse blithe  
She herpeth godd a hundred thousand sith

In Vertu and in holy almesse dede  
They lyuen alle and neuer a sonder lende  
Tyl deth departed hem this lyf they lede  
And faith now wel my tale is at an ende  
Now ihesus crist that of hys myght may sende  
Gode aftyr woo gouerne us in hys grace  
And kepe us alle that been in this place

Here endyth the man of lawes tale

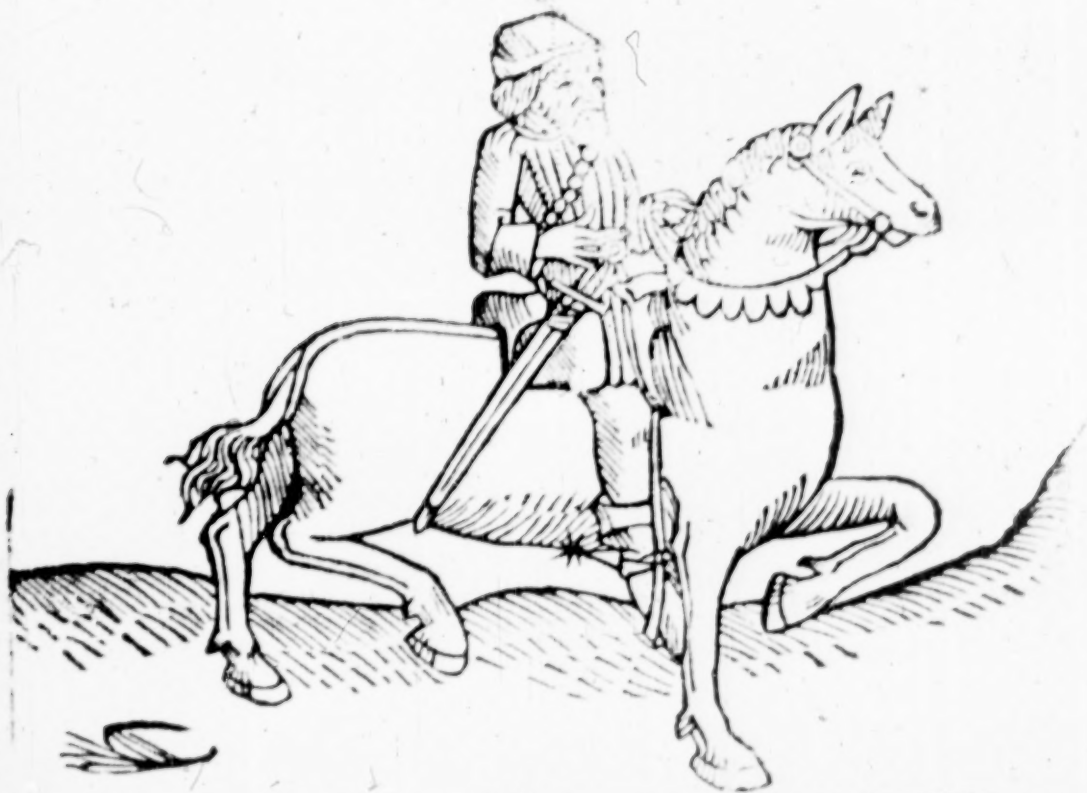
And begynneth the marchauntes prologe

**W**eppynge & waypynge care & other sorow  
I haue ynough bothe euen & ek a morow  
Quod þe marchaunt & so haue other mo  
That weddid he I trow that it be so

For wel I woot it fareth so by me  
I haue a wyf the worstee that may be  
For though the fend coupled to here were  
She wolde hym ouermatche I dar wel sware  
What shold I you telere in speyal  
Her hygh malice she is a shrewbe at al  
There is a longe and a large difference  
Betwyx gasildis grace & patience  
And of my wyf the passynge cruelte  
Were I bounde also not I the

## The marchauntes Prologe

I wolde heuer este come in the snare  
we weddid; men lyue in sorow and care  
Asay who so wol and he shal fynde  
that I say soth by saynt Thomas of ynde  
As fore the more part I say not al  
Gods shylde that it shold; so befall  
A good; sirc hoste I haue weddyd; he  
Thys monethis tibo and; more not parde  
And; yet I trow he that al hys lyf  
Hath weddid; he though men hym kys  
Into the sirc he coude in no manere  
Telle so muche sorow as I nolv here  
Coude telle of my wyues cursidnes  
Nolv quod; our hoste marchaunt so good; pouasse  
Syn pe so mykyl knowe of that art  
ful hertely I pray you telle us part  
Gladly quod; he but of men olben fore  
For sayp here I telle may nomore



## The marchauntes tale

Here begynneth the marchauntes tale

**W**hosome ther was dwellyng in lūbardye  
A worthy knyght that born was at paup  
In whiche he luyde in gret prosperite  
And yē peer a wyfless man was he  
And folowyd by hys bodyly delyt  
On women ther was hys appetyt  
As doon thise folis that ben secular  
And when that he was passid yē peer  
Were it for holynesse or for dotage  
I can not say but such a gret corage  
Hadde thys knyght to be a weddyd man  
That day and nyght he doth al that he can  
To aspye where he myght weddyd be  
Prapengr our lord graunt hym that he  
Myght onys knowe that blissful lyf  
That is betwix an husbond and hys wyf  
And for to lyue vnder the holy bond  
With which god first man & womman bond  
None other lyf sayd he is worth a bene  
For wedlok is so esy and so clene  
That in thys world it is a paradyse  
Thus sayd thys old knyght that was so wyse  
And certenly as soth as god is kyng  
To take a wyf is a glorious thyng  
And namely when a man is old and poor  
Then is a wyf the fruyt of hys tresoor  
Than shold he take a yonge wyf & a feyr  
On whiche he myght engendre hym an heyr  
And lede hys lyf in joye and in solace  
Where as thise luckles spongen alas  
When that they fynde ony aduersite  
In loue whiche nys but chyldeys vanyte  
And trewly it sit wel to be so  
That luckles haue ofte payne and woo  
On brotyl ground they hylde and brotylnesse  
They fynde freler when they bene sikernesse

## The marchauntes tale

They lyue but as a bridz or as a best  
In lyberte andz vnder none arrest  
There as a weddyd man in hys astat  
Exueth hys lyf blissful andz ordynat  
Vnder the yoke of mariage y bounde  
Wel may hys hert in ioye andz blisse habounde  
For who can be so buyum as a wyf  
Who is so trewe andz eke so ententyf  
To kepe hym seek & hool andz is hys make  
For weel or woo she wyll not hym forsake  
She is nat wery hym to loue andz serue  
Though that he lye bedrede tyl he sterue  
Andz yet some clerkis sayn it is not so  
Of wyfelye he Trophrasse is one of tho  
What for is though Trophrasse lyste lye  
He take no wyf quod he for husbondrye  
As for to spare in householdz thyn expence  
A trewe seruaunt doth more diligence  
Thy goodz to kepe than doth thy self wyf  
For she wol clayme half part al her lyf  
Andz yf that thou be seek so godz me saue  
Thy very frendis or a trewe kinaue  
Wol kepe the bet than she that waytyth ay  
After thy deth andz hath do meny a day  
This sentence & an hundredz thynges worse  
Wyrteth thys man there godz his bones corse  
But take no kepe of such vanyte  
Do fy Trophrasse andz serken me  
A wyf is goddis yeste veryly  
Al other maner yestes hardly  
As londis rentis pasturis or comune  
Or moebles all ben yestes of fortune  
That passen as a shadow on a wal  
But drede not yf I playnly speke shal  
A wyf wyll laste andz in thy hous endure  
Wel longer than the lyfte prauenture  
Marriage is a ful greet sacrament  
Who that hath no wyf is but srent

## The marchauntes tale

He luyppth helpeles and is al desolat  
I speke of folk in seculer estat  
And herken why I say not thys for nought  
The womman is for mannes helpe y brought  
The hygh god whan he hadde Adam makyd  
And salu hym allone helpe nakyd  
God of hys grete goodnesse sayd than  
Let he nolv make an helpe to thys man  
Lye to hym self and than he made eue  
Here may ye se and here by may ye preue  
That a wyf is mannes helpe & hys comfort  
Hys paradysse terreste and hys dysport  
So buyow and so vertuous is she  
They muste nedys lyue in byete  
O flesch they be and of o blood I gesse  
Not but one herte in wyf and in dyscesse  
A wyf a saynte Mary benedicte  
How myght a man haue ony aduersite  
That hath a wyf certis I can not sey  
The blysse that is betwyx hem twey  
There may no tonge telle it or herte thynke  
If he be poure she helppth hym to stynte  
She kepith his good & wasteith it neuer a deel  
And al that her husbond lust she likyth weel  
She sayth not onys nay whan he sayth ye  
Do thys sayth he al redy she sayth she  
O blissful ordre o wedlok precious  
Thou art so mery and eek so vertuous  
And so comendyd and approued eke  
That every man that holte hym worth a keek  
Up on hys bare knees ought al hys lyf  
Thankyn hys god that hym sent a wyf  
Or ellis praye god hym forto sende  
A wyf to laste vnto hys lyues ende  
For than hys lyf is set in sikirnesse  
He may not be disceyued as I gesse  
So that he worke aftyr hys wyues rede  
Than may he holdely lere by hys hede

## The marchauntes tale

They be so trewe/and; thereto eke so wyse  
For wyse of thou wolt worche as the wyse  
Do allway as the woman wol the rede  
Lo how Jacob as this clerkys rede  
By good; counsel of his moder recheke  
Wond; the kyddis skyn aboute his necke  
For wyse his fadiris benyson he wan  
Lo judyth as the story wel telle can  
By wyse counsel she goddis peple kepte  
And; slew hym Othernes wyse he slepte  
Lo how Abigayl by good; counsel that she  
Saued; her husband; Nabal when that he  
Shulde haue be slayn and; like hester also  
By good; counsel deliuered; out of wo  
The peple of god; and; made mardoche  
Of assuere enchaunted; forth to be  
That is no thyng; in gre superstacyf  
As sayth Senek; aboue an humble wyf  
Suffre thy wyues tonge as Caton sayt  
She shal comaunde and; thou shalt suffre it  
And; yet she wyll obeye of curtesye  
A wyf is keper of thy husband;ye  
Wel may the seek man selway be and; wepe  
There as no wyf is the hous to kepe  
I warne the of thou wysely wylt wyse  
Loue wel thy wyf as cryst loueth his chyrche  
If thou louest thy self thou louest thy wyf  
Noman hatyth his flessch but in his lyf  
He foster h it and; therefore hyde I the  
Chastte thy wyf or thou shalt neuer the  
Husband; and; wyf what so men iape or pley  
Of wordly folk holden the spker wey  
They been knyt there may no harme letyde  
And; namel; vpon the wyues side  
For wyse this January of wyse I told;  
Considerth hath in wyth his dayes olde  
The lusty lyf the vertuous quyet  
That is in maryage hony swete

## The marchauntes tale

And for hys frendis on a day he sent  
To telle them the effect of hys entent  
Wyth face sad he hath hys tale to hem told  
He sayd frendys I am hoor and old  
And almost godd boot at my pittis brynke  
Wy on my soule somwhat muste I thynke  
I haue my body folpely dispendyd  
Wysshyd be godd it shal be amendyd  
For I wold be certeyn a weddid man  
And that anon in al the haste that I can  
Unto some mayde fayr and tender of age  
I pray you shappty for my maryage  
Al sodenly for I wol not abyde  
And I wol fonde to aspye on my spide  
To whome I may be weddid hastily  
But for as moche as ye be mo than I  
Ye shul rather suke a thyng espyen  
Than I and wylte me lyst best aspen  
But o thyng I warne you my frendis dre  
I wyl none old wyf haue in no manere  
She shal not passe xij yeer certeyn  
Old fyssh & yong flessh wil I haue ful fayne  
Bet is sayd be a pylke than a pylkerel  
Wetter than old beest is the tender veel  
I wol no woman of xxx yeer of age  
It is but bene seual and greet forage  
And eke thys old wydolwes godd it woot  
They conne so mykyl craft in badys woot  
So mykyl broken harm what hem lyst  
That wyth hem shold I neuer lyue in rest  
For sondry scolis makyth subtyl clerkis  
Woman of many a scole half a clerk is  
But certeynly a yonge thyng may men gye  
Right as a man wyth hōdis warm weye plye  
Therefore I say you pleynly in a clause  
I wold none old wyf haue for thys cause  
For yf so were yf I hadde suke myschaunce  
That I in here coude haue no plesaunce

## The marchauntes tale

Than shold I lede my lyf in aboutrye  
And so serpyght to the deuel whan I dye  
Ne chyldren sholde I none on herte getyn  
Yet hadde I leuer houndis hadde me etyn  
Than that myn herptage shulde falle  
In straunge hond; & thus I telle you alle  
I doo not I boote the cause why  
Men sholde wedde & ferthermore boote I  
There speketh meny men of mariage  
That boote nomore of it than doth my page  
For whyche causis men shold take a wyf  
If he may not lyeuen chaste hys lyf  
Take hym a wyf wyth greet deuocion  
By cause of lefful procreacion  
Of chyldryng to the honour of god; aboue  
And not only for paramour ne for loue  
And for they shold lecherie eschue  
And yelde her dette whan that it is due  
Or for that eche of hem shold helpe othyr  
In myschync as the sustyr shal the brothyr  
And lyue in chastyte ful holyly  
But sires by your leue that am not I  
For god; sekthankid; I dar make auant  
I fele my lymys seark and suffiaunt  
To do al that a man belongeth to  
And am stronge ynough to ryde or goo  
Though I be hoor fare as doth a tre  
That blosmeth or that fruyt y wyopen be  
A blosmed; tre is neyther drye ne ded;  
I fele me no wher hoor but on myn hed;  
My herte and al my lymes ben as grene  
As laurer that thoroow the peer is sene  
And sithyns ye haue herd; al myn entent  
I pray you that to my wyf ye assent  
Of dyuers men dyuersly hym tolde  
Of maryage meny ensamples olde  
Some blamed; it some preyssid; it certyn  
But at the laste shortly forthw; syn

## The marchauntes tale

As alday falleth alteracion  
Betwix frendis in dysputacion  
There fyl a strif betwix hys bretheren also  
Of whiche that one was clepyd placebo  
Justinus sothly called was that other  
Placebo sayd o January brother  
Ful lpyl nede had ye my lord so dre  
Counseyl to ope of ony that is here  
But that ye be one so ful of sapyence  
That you ne likyth for your hygh prudence  
To lyeue fro the word of Salamon  
Thys word sayd he to be euerichon  
Work al thyng by counseyl thus sayd he  
And than shalt not thou repente tho  
But though Salamon spak such a word  
Myn olven dre brother and my lord  
So wysely god my soule brynge at rest  
I holde your olven counsel for the best  
For brother myn of me take this motif  
I haue nob be a courtman al my lpyf  
And yet godd boot though I vnworthy be  
I haue stonde in ful gret a hye degre  
About lordis in ful gret astat  
Yet hadde I neuer lpyth none of hem deuat  
I neuer contrarped hem trewly  
I boot wel that my lord can more than I  
What that he seyth I hold it ferme a stable  
I say the same or other thyng semblable  
A ful gret fool is ony counsellour  
That scrupth a lord of hygh honour  
That dre presume or onys thynke it  
That hys counsel shold passe hys lordis wit  
May lordys be no folis by my fay  
Ye haue your self spoken here to day  
So hygh sentence so holy and so wel  
That I consente and conferme euerydel  
Your wordis and al your oppynion  
By god there is no man in thys toun

## The marchauntes tale

He in ptaile coude better haue sayd  
Eate holdyth hym of thys ful wel payde  
And trewly it is an hygh corage  
Of ony man that slept is in age  
To take a ponge wyf for by my fader kyn  
Your bert hongyth vp on a joly pye  
Doth nolv in thys mater as you lest  
For fynally I holdy it for the best  
Justinus that ay sat ful styll and herd  
Ryght on thys wyse he to place answerd  
Nolv brother myn quod he be patient I pray  
Syn ye haue sayd herkyne what I say  
Senek amonge other wordes wyse  
Sayth that a man ought hym right wel awyse  
To whome he yeuyth hys bond or hys catell  
And sythnes I ought me awyse ryght well  
To whome I yeue my good alway fro me  
Wel moche more I ought for to awyse me  
To whome I yeue my body for allwey  
I warne you wel it is no chyldis play  
To take a wyf wythout awysment  
Men muste enqueren thys is myn assent  
Whether she be wyse sober or dronkele  
An out goar or othyr wey a shrelle  
A chydester or a waster of thy good  
Ryche or poure or of maners wooode  
Al be it so that noman fynde shal  
None in thys world that trottith fool in al  
Ne man ne best such as men can deuyse  
But neuertheless it ought ynolv suffyse  
Wyth ony wyf yf so were that she hadde  
Moo thylles good than her vicia hadde  
And al thys a yeth leyser to enquer  
For god it boote I haue wept ful meny a tere  
Ful pryncely syn I hadde a wyf  
Pryse who so wol a weddyd mannes lyf  
Certeyn I fynde in it but coste and care  
And obseruancia of alle blissis here

## The marchauntes tale

And yet godd boote myn neyghebores aboute  
And namely of wommen meny a route  
Sayn that I haue the moste stedfast wyf  
And eke the mekest one that berith lyf  
But I boote best wher wyngyth me my sh  
Ye may for me right as ye like do  
Nupth you ye be a man of age  
Holt that ye enten in to mariage  
And namely wyth a yonge wyf and a feyr  
By hym that made watyr erthe and eyr  
The yongest man that is in all thys route  
Is kesy ynough to brynge it aboute  
To haue a wyf alone but trusteth me  
Ye shul not plesen hyr only peris thre  
Thys is to say to do hyr ful plesaunce  
A wyf axeth ful many an obseruaunce  
I pray you that ye be not euyl apayd  
Wel quod thys January & hast thou sayd  
Stralw for thy senek and for thy prouerbis  
I counte not a paner ful of serbis  
Of scole termes wyser men than thow  
As thou hast herd hath sentid right noll  
To my purpos Placcho what sey ye  
I sey it is a cursid man quod he  
That letteth matrimeny sikirly  
And wyth that word they rylen sodenly  
And been assentyd anone that he sholde  
We weddid whan hym list & wher he wold  
Byghe fanteise and the kesy coriousnesse  
Fro day to day gan in the soule impressse  
Of January aboute hys mariage  
Many fayr shap and meny fair visage  
Elke passith thorow hys hert nyght by nyght  
As who so took a myrou: polisthed bryght  
And set it in a comyn market place  
Than shold he se many a fygure pace  
By thys myroure and in the same wyse  
Can January in wyth hys thought deuse

## The marchauntes tale

Of maydens whiche dwelled there beside  
He wiste not where he myght abyde  
For yf that one haue beaute in her face  
Anothyr stont so in the pepys grace  
For her sadnesse and her kempnyte  
That of the pepyl greet boys hadde she  
And some were rich & hadde lorde name  
But Natheles betwix earnest and game  
He atte laste appoynted hym on one  
And let alle othyr fro his lerte goon  
And chose her on his olon auctorite  
For loue is blynd alday and may not se  
And when he was in his bedde y brought  
He portreyed in his lert and in his thought  
Her fresch beaute and her age tender  
Her myddyl smal her armys long & slender  
Her wyse gouernaunce & her gentylnesse  
Her wommanly beryng and her sadnesse  
And when he was on her condescendid  
Hym thought his choyse myght net be amēdid  
For when he hym self concluded hadde  
Hym thoughte eche other manys wit so hadde  
That impossible it were for to reuylpe  
Aysens his choyse thys was his fantasye  
His frendys senta he to at his instaunce  
And prayde hem to do hym that plesaunce  
That hastely they wold to hym come  
He wold abrydge her labour al and some  
Nedyth nomore for hym to go ne ryde  
He was appoynted there he wold abyde  
Placebo cam & eke his frendys sone  
And alderfirst he luid hem alle alone  
That none of hem none argumtis shold make  
Aysens the purpos whiche that he had y take  
Whiche purpos was plesaunt to god sayde he  
And berry ground of his prosperite  
He sayd ther was a mayden in the town  
Whiche that of beaute hadde greet renoun

## The marchauntes tale

Al were it so she was of smal degre  
Suffysith hym her polythe and her beaute  
Whiche mayde he sayd he wold haue to his wif  
To lede in ese and holynesse hys lyf  
And thanke god that he myght haue her al  
That no wyght wyth his blisse parten shal  
And prayde hem to labour in thys nede  
And shapen that he fayleth not to spede  
For than he sayd hys sprit was at ese  
Than is quod he nothyng me may dysplese  
Sauo o thyng prickith me my conscience  
The wyche I wol reuerce in your presence  
Ye haue herd sayd ful longe sithys a goo  
Eke may noman haue parfit blisse tibo  
Thys is to seyn in erthe and eek in heuyn  
For thegh he kepte hym fro the synnyng scyn  
And eke from euerye braunch of that tre  
Yet is there so parfyt prosperite  
And so gret ese and lust in mariage  
That euer I am agast now in myn age  
That I shal lede now so mery a lyf  
So delysat wythout woo and serf  
That I shal haue my heuen in erthe here  
For sith very heuen is bought so dere  
Wyth tribulacion and gret penaunce  
How shold than that lyue in such pleasaunce  
As alle weddyd men doon wyth her wyues  
Come to the blis there crist etern on lyue is  
Thys is my drede and ye my brethren tibe  
Aspylith me thys question I you prey  
Justinus wyche that hatyd hys folc  
Answerd anone right in hys jaxer  
And for he wold hys longe tale alrede  
He wold none auctorite alledge  
But sayde sitte yf there be none obstakyl  
Othyr than thys god of hys wyght myrakyl  
And of hys mercy may so for you wiche  
That er ye haue your rightis of holy churche

## The marchauntes tale

Ye may repente of weddyd mannes lyf  
In whiche ye say there is no wo ne serpyf  
Ande ellis godd forbide but yf he sent  
A wedded man grace hym to repente  
Wel ofter rather than a sengyl man  
Ande therfore the beste rede that I can  
Dyspeyreth you not but haue in memorye  
Parauenture she may be your purgatorye  
She may be goddis mene ande goddis whipe  
Than shal your soule vp to heuyn shype  
Swyfter than an awlb doth out of a tolbe  
I hope to godd here after shul ye knowe  
That ther nys noon so greet felicitye  
In maryage ne neuer none shal be  
That you shal lette of your saluacion  
So that ye vse it as skil is ande reson  
The lustis of your wyf temperatly  
Ande that ye please her not to amercously  
Ande that ye kepe you eke from other synne  
My tale is doon for my wyf is thynne  
Weth not agast here of my dere brother  
But lett vs wade fro thys matter to another  
The wyf of luthie yf ye haue vnderstande  
Of mariage whiche I haue in honde  
Declared hath ful wel in lryl space  
Fareth nolv wel godd haue you in hys grace  
Ande wyth thys wordd he wyth hys brother  
Hath take her leue ande eke of hem of other  
For when they salbe it must nedis be  
They wroughte so by slye ande wyse tete  
That thys maye whiche that maye hygh be  
As fastely as euer that she myghte  
Shal weddyd be vnto January  
I trolbe it were you to longe to tary  
If I you told of euery esent ande bond  
Be whiche she was fessed in hys bond  
Ofor forto harken of her ryche aray  
But fynally comyn is the day

## The marchauntes tale

That to chyrche tothe keen they went  
For to receyue the holy sacrament  
Forth comyth þe preest with stole about his neck  
And had hyr be like Sarra and Feseck  
In wysedome and trouthe of mariage  
And sayd hys orysones in hys blage  
And wolbehid hem & had god shold hym blees  
And made al siker ynolw byth holynes  
Thus keen they weddid with solempnyte  
And at the feste sittyth he and she  
With other worthy folk vp on the dyes  
Al ful of ioye and blisse is the Paleys  
And ful of instrumentis and bytapl  
The moste deyntrous of al jtapl  
Beforn hym stood instrumentis of such a soun  
That Orpheus ne of Theseus Amphion  
Ne made neuer such a melodye  
At euery cours cam boude mynstrelle  
That neuer Joab trompyd forth be  
Neither he Theomidas half so cleve  
At Theseus when the cyte was in doute  
Bachus the wyne hem stenkith al aboute  
And Venus solagh vpon euery wyght  
For January was becomen her knyght  
And bold tothe assaen hys corage  
In liberte as she is in mariage  
And byth her fierbrond in her hond aboute  
Daunsith befor the bryde and al the rout  
And creynly I dar wel sayn right thys  
Euenius that god of weddyng is  
Salv neuer in his lyf so mery a weddid man  
Hold thou thy pres thou poet marian  
That wrytise be that ilke weddyng mery  
Of her philologye and of hym mercurye  
And of songis that the musis songe  
To smal is tothe penne and she tonge  
For to dyscraven of thys mariage  
When tender youthe had weddid stouppng age

## The marchauntes tale

There is such myrthe þ it may not be wyten  
I say your self and than may ye wyten  
If that I lacke or none in thys matter  
May that syt wyth so benygne a chere  
Here to beholde it semeth a fayre  
Quene hester lokyd neuer wyth such an eye  
On assuere so meke a loke as she  
I may you not denyse al her beaute  
But thus muche of her beaute telle I may  
That she was lyke the bryght morow of may  
Fulflouryd of al beaute and of plesance  
Thys January is rauysshyd in a traunce  
At euery tyme she lokyd on her face  
But in hys herte she gan her maner  
That she that nyght in armes wolde her streyne  
Harder than paris euer dede Eleyne  
But natheles yet hadde she grete pyte  
That that nyght offende her muste she  
And thoughte alas o tender creature  
How wolde god ye myght wel endure  
Al my corage it is so sharp and kene  
I am agast ye may it not sustene  
But god forde I dede al my myght  
How wolde god it were bove nyght  
And that the nyght wolde laste euermore  
I wolde that al thys peple were ago  
And fynally she doth al hys labour  
As she best myght sauynge hys honour  
To haste hem fro the mete in subtyl wyse  
The tyme cam that reson was to ryse  
And after that men daunsyd and drank faste  
And spicas al aboute the hous they caste  
And ful of joye and blisse is euery man  
Alle but a squyer that hyghte Dampayn  
Whycher carf before the knyght meny a day  
He was so rauysshyd on hys lady may  
That for the very payne he was nygh wode  
Almost he sweltyd & swolned there he stood

## The marchauntes tale

So sore hath Venus hurt hym wpyth her bronde  
 As that she hure it daunsynge in her honde  
 And to hys bed she wente hym hastily  
 Nomore of hym at thys tyme speke I  
 But there I let hym wepe ynough & pleyne  
 Tyll fresh may wol relbe on hys pyne

**O** verblous fyre that in the hedstrail bredith  
 O samplier foo that hys scrupel ledyth  
 O seruaunt treybur fals homely helbe  
 Lpke to the adder sligh in bosom vntrelbe  
 God shylde be alle from your acquyntaunce  
 O January drunken in pleyssaunce  
 Of marpage/se hou that thy Dampayn  
 Thy olben squyer & thy horn man  
 Entendyth for to do the a deynge  
 God graunte the thy homly foo to spyce  
 For in thys world nys noore pestilence  
 Than an homly foo alday in thy presence  
 Warfourmyd hath the sonne hys arke dyurne  
 No lenger may the body of hym sojourne  
 On the orysont as in that latytude  
 Nyght wpyth hys mantel that is so derk & uide  
 Can for to sprede the emyspery aboute  
 For whyche departyth is the lusey route  
 Fro January wpyth thank on euery syde  
 Hoom to theyr housis lusely they ryde  
 There as they do thyngis as hem lyst  
 And when they see her tyme they go to reste  
 Some aftyr thys hastily thys January  
 Wolde go to bedde he wolde no lenger tary  
 He drynktyth wyne as clarey and vernage  
 And spicis hoot to entere hys corage  
 And meny a lettuary hadd he ful fyn  
 Suche as the cursid monk dan constantyn  
 Hath wryten in hys booke of conit  
 To ete hem alle he wolde nothyng eschew  
 And thus to hys pryncy frendis sayd he  
 For goddis leue as sone as it may be

## The marchauntes tale

Leet boyde al thys hous in curteis wyse  
And they haue don ryght as he wold; dury se  
Men dronken and the trauers drelb anone  
This bride was brought to bedde as still as ston  
And whan the bed was with þ prest blessed  
Out of þ chābir hath euery wight hym dressed  
And January hath faste in armys take  
His freeth may hys paradys hys make  
He kisse h here he kysseth here ful oft  
Wyth the brustullis of hys kerd; vnsofte  
Enk to the skyn of hound; fiffh sharp as brete  
For he was shauē al nelbe in hys manere  
He rubbeth here vpon her tender face  
And sayd thus allas I mu te trespass  
To you my spoule and you gretly offende  
O: tyme come that I wyl down descende  
But natheles considerith thys quod; he  
Ther is no workman what so euer he be  
That may sothe worse he wel and hastily  
Thys wold he do at leyser parfily  
It is no force how longe that he pleye  
In trewe wedlok couplid; he be thbere  
And blissyd; he the pok that he been ynnē  
For in our actis he molbe do no synne  
A man may do no synne wyth hys wyf  
He hurte hym self wyth hys owen knyf  
For he haue leue to pleye vs by the salbe  
Thus labourith he tyl the day gan dalbe  
And than he taky h a sep in fyn clare  
And by right in hys bedde sittyth he  
And after that he sange ful solwe and; clere  
And kysseth hys wyf & makith wanton chere  
He was al coltyth and; ful of Fagery  
And; ful of Jargon as is a fleckid; pye  
The flak skyn aboute hys necke shakyth  
Whyle that he song; so chauntyd; he & crakith  
But god woo; what may thought in her hert  
Whan se hym salb by sittynge in hys stert

## The marchauntes tale

In his nyght cappe and wyth hys necke lene  
She preyseth not hys pleppnge worth a bene  
Than sayd he thus my reste wol I take  
Nolw day is come I may no longer wake  
And down he leyde hys hede & slept tyl pryme  
And aftyr whan that he salbe hys tyme  
Up risith January but fresh may  
She holdyth hyr chamber tyl the fourthe day  
As vsage is of wyues for the beste  
For euery labour sumtyme muste haue reste  
Or ellis longe may he not endure  
Thys is to say no wyues creature  
Be it ffish or byrd best or man  
Nolw wol I speke of woful Dampayn  
That languish for loue as ye shul here  
Therefore I speke to hym in thys manere  
I say o sely Dampayn alas  
Answer to thys demaunde in thys caas  
How shalt thou thy lady fresh may  
Telle thy woo she wol allwey say nay  
Eke yf thou speke she wyll thy wo kelyue  
God he thy help I can no better seyn  
Thys sike Dampayn in Venus greet fyre  
So brennyth that he dyeth for desire  
For whyche he putteth hys lyf in auenture  
No lenger myght he in thys wyse endure  
But pryncely a penner gan he sorowbe  
And in a letter broot al hys sorow  
In maner of a compleynt or a lay  
Unto hys fresh and fayr lady may  
And in a purs of silk hynged it on hys skirt  
He hath y put and y leyde it at hys skirt  
That January hath wedded fresh may  
Eke mone that at none was that day  
Out of tawre was in the Canike shopyn  
So longe hath Mayus in her chambyr hyden  
As custome is vnto thys nobles alle  
A byde shal not etyn in the halle

## The marchauntes tale

Tyl dayes four or thre atte leste  
Passyd be than let hyr go to feste  
The ferte day compleet fro noone to noone  
Whan that the hygh masse was doone  
In halle sat thys January and may  
As fressh as is the bryght someris day  
And so be fyl that thys good man  
Remembryth hym vpon thys Dampyan  
And sayd saynt mary holb may thys be  
That Dampyan entendyth not to me  
Is he ay sik or holb may thys ketyde  
Hys squyere whyche that stood hym lesyde  
Excusyd hym by cause of hys siknesse  
Whyche letttyth hym to do hys besynesse  
None othyr cause myghte make hym to tarye  
That me forthynktyth quod thys January  
He is a gentyl squyer by my trouthe  
If that he deyde it were harm and wouthye  
He is wyse dyscret honest and seere  
As ony man I boot of hys degre  
And therto manly and eke seuryfable  
And forto be a thyrsty man ryght able  
But aftyr mete as sone as euer I may  
I wyl my self vpyte hym and may  
To do hym al the comfort that I can  
And for that word hym blissyd euery man  
That of hys hounte and hys gentylnesse  
He wolde so comforte in siknesse  
Hys squyer for it was a gentyl dede  
Dame quod thys January take good hede  
That aftyr mete ye wyth your women alle  
Wen ye haue be in chamber out of thys halle  
That alle ye go to see thys Dampyan  
To do hym dysport he is a gentyl man  
And tellyth that I wol hym vpyte  
Haue I nothyng but restyd me a lyte  
And spece you fast for I wol abyde  
Tyl that ye slepe faste by my syde

## The marchauntes tale

And with this word he gan to hym calle  
A squyer that was marshal of his halle  
And told hym certeyn thyngis what he hold  
This fressh may hath serpyght her wey holde  
With alle her bymmen into this dampen  
Down by his bedside anone sat she than  
Comfortyng hym as goodly as she may  
This dampen when he his tyme say  
In pryncyple his pure and eke his blythe  
In which that he byten had al his myght  
Hath put in to his hond withouten more  
Sawe that he sighe right wonderly sore  
And softly to her right thus sayd he  
Mercy and that ye dyscouer not me  
For I am dede yf that this thyng be kyde  
This bylle had she in her bosom kyde  
And wente her wey ye gete nomore of me  
Unto January comyn thenne is she  
And on his bedde side sat ful softe  
He talketh her and kysseth her ful ofte  
And leyde hym down to slepe and that anone  
She ferred her as that she must goone  
There as ye boote euery byght must nede  
And when she of this bylle hath take hede  
She rente it all to aboutis and atte laste  
In the pryncyple softly hath she it caste  
Who studeyth now but fayre fressh may  
And down by old January she lay  
That slept tyl the colde hath hym wakid  
Anone he preyde her to serpe her nakid  
He wolde of her he sayde haue sum plesaunce  
He sayde her clotheys dyde hym encumbrance  
And she oketh he she leef or keth  
But lest that precious folk with me be broth  
Hold that he wroughte I dar you not telle  
Or whether her thoughte it paradise or helle  
But I kepe hem werke in her bylle  
Tyl euensong and that they muste aryse

## The marchauntes tale

Were it by destinye or by aventure  
Were it by influence or by nature  
Other constellacion that in such astat  
The knyght stood; that tyme fortunat  
Was forto put a hyl of Venus lberkis  
For al thyng; hath tyme as sayn clerkis  
To ony womman forto gete her loue  
I can not sey but grete god; aboue  
That knoweth that none aye is causeles  
He demyth al for I wol holde my pes  
But soth it is holi that thys fressh may  
Hath take such impressioun that day  
Of pyte of thys sik man Dampayn  
That fro hys herte she ne dryue ne can  
The remembraunce forto do hym ese  
Certeyn thoughte she whom this thyng displese  
I herre recke not I hym assure  
To loue hym best of ony creature  
Thogh she nomore hadde than hys stert  
So pyte weneeth sone in gentyl hert  
Here may ye here holi excellent fraunchyse  
In wommen is whan they sem natoli auyse  
Some tyraunt ther is as there be many on  
That hath an herte as hard; as ony stoon  
Whiche wolde haue leet hym sterue in þe place  
Wel rather than haue grauntid; hym grace  
And; sem reioysen in her cruel pryde  
And; reckyd; not to be an hompade  
Thys gentyl may fulfyllid; of al pyte  
Ryght so of her hond; a lettyr made she  
In which she grauntid; hym her berry grace  
Ther lackyth nought but ony day and; space  
Where that she myght to his lust suffise  
For it shal be right as she wol deuyse  
And; whan she sald her tyme vpon a day  
To vpyte this Dampayn goth this fressh may  
And; subtyll; a lettyr down she thryste  
Under hys pyllow; it ys hym lyte

## The marchauntes tale

She takyth hym by þe hond & harde hym twiste  
So secretly that noman it wiste  
And lady hym þe al hool & forth she went  
To January whan that he for her sent  
Oppenly Dampayn the next morow  
Al passyd was his sickness and hys sorow  
He kembeth hym & prynceth hym and picketh  
He doth al that hys lady lust and liketh  
And eke to January he goth as solwe  
As euere dyde a dogge for the solwe  
He is so plesaunt to euery man  
For craft is al who so that it can  
That euery wight is fayne to speke hym good  
And fully in hys ladies grace he stood  
Thus lette I Dampayn aboute hys nede  
And in my tale forth I wol procede  
Some clerkis holden that felicitie  
Stont in delyt and therefore certayn he  
Thys nobyl January wryth al hys myght  
In honest wyse as longeth to a knyght  
Whop hym to lyue ful deliciausly  
Hys holysynge hys aray as honestly  
To hys degre was made as a kyngis  
Amonge other of hys honest thyngis  
He hadde a gardyn wallyd al wryth stene  
So feyr a gardyn wot I nowher none  
For oute of doute I verily suppose  
That he that broot the remaine of the Rose  
He coude of it the beaute wel deuyse  
He priapus ne myghte not suffyse  
Though he be god of gardyne for to telle  
The beaute of the gardyn and of the wellle  
That stood vnder a laurer allway grene  
Ful ofte tyme kyngs plute and hys quene  
Proserpina and alle her feyre  
Dysporten hem and make melodye  
Aboute that wellle and daunsed as men wolde  
Thys nobyl knyght thys January the olde

## The marchauntes tale

Suche deynce hath in it to walkyn & to pleye  
That he wol suffre no wyght to leue the key  
Saue he hym self for of the smale wyket  
He haue allway of siluer a chiket  
Wyth the wykele wyke he list vnsyght  
And wyke he wolde paye hys wyf hys dette  
In somer seson thyder wold he go  
And may hys wyf & no wyght but they shal  
And thyngis that were not do a fedde  
He in the gardyn perfourmed hem & sped  
And in this wyse meny a mery day  
Euen this January and fresch may  
But wordly ioye may not allway endure  
To January ne no wordly creature  
O fodeyn hap o thou fortune vnsable  
Lye vnto the scorpion so deceyuable  
That flatterst with thy red wyke þu wilt syng  
Thy tayl is deeth thorow thyne enuynymyng  
O brotel ioye o thou swete poyson queynt  
O thou monker that subtilly canst preynt  
Thy gyfte vnder helme of stedfastnesse  
That thou deceyuest both more and lesse  
Why fast thou January thus deceyued  
That haddest hym for thy frend rescyued  
And now thou hast beaft both hys eyen  
For sorow of wykele he desirith to dyen  
Alas this January that is so fre  
Amyd hys lust and hys prosperite  
Is now woxen blynde and that al sodenly  
He wepeth and he warleth prouously  
And therewith al the fyre of Iehospe  
Lest that hys wyf shal falle in some folpe  
So bent hys herte that he wold sayn  
That some men bothe hym & hys had sleyn  
For neuer after hys deeth ne hys lyf  
He wolde he that he were loue ne wyf  
But euer lyue as a wydolfe in clothys blake  
Sool as the turtyl that hath lost her make

## The marchauntes tale

But atte laste aftyr a monthes or tweye  
Hys sorow gan to swage soth to seye  
For he wiste it may none other be  
He paciently took hys aduersite  
Saue oute of doute may he not forgo  
That he ne was jelous euermore in one  
Whiche jelousye it was so outrageous  
That neyther in halle ne in other hous  
Ne in none othyr place neytr the mo  
He nolde suffre here for to ryde ne go  
But yf that he had hondz on her alwey  
For whiche ful of te wepyth fresch may  
That lounth Dampayn so tendrely  
That she muste othyr deye sodenly  
Or ellis she muste haue hym atte her leste  
She wartyth when her herte woldz to breste  
Wp on that othyr side thys Dampayn  
By compyn is the sorowfullist man  
That euer was for neyther nyght ne day  
He myght he speke a wordz wyth fresch may  
As of hys purpose of none such matyr  
But yf that January muste it here  
That had an hondz vpon her euyr mo  
But natheles by wartyngz to and fro  
And pryncy signys wiste he what she ment  
And she knew of the same hys entent  
O January what myght the auaylle  
Though y myghtist se as fer as ship doth sayle  
For as goodz blyndz is deceyuedz to be  
As to be deceyuedz when a man may se  
So argus whiche that had an hundryd eyen  
For al that euer he coude purre or pryen  
Yet was he blent and godz boote so he mo  
That wenyn wel that it is nothyngz so  
Passe oure is an else I say nomore  
Thys fresch may of whiche I spak of yore  
In warm wey hath pryncyd thys chik  
That January hear of the smale wyket

## The marchauntes tale

By whyche vnto hys gardyn ofte he went  
And dampayn that knelbe her entent  
The chikket countrefetide pryncely  
There is nomore to sey but hastely  
Some wonder by thys chikket shal he tye  
Whyche ye shal here yf ye wyl abyde  
O nobyl Ouyde soth sayst thou godd boote  
What slepyghte it is thoug it be longe & soot  
That he nyl fynde it out in some manere  
By Pyramus and Tyssbe may men here  
Though they were kept strept longe ouyr al  
They been accordyd wyllynge throu a wal  
Ere no wight coude haue foude suche a slepyghte  
But nolt to purpoos or that dayes eyghte  
Were passid or the moneth of Iul he fyl  
That January hath caught so greet a wyl  
Thorough eggyng of his wif hym forto pleye  
In hys gardyn & no wight but they tvey  
That in a morow vnto thys may sayd he  
Fylse vp my wylf my loue my lady fre  
The turtelis boys I herde my spouse swete  
The wynter is goon wyth hys raynes wet  
Come forth wyth thy eyn columbyne  
Nolt fayrer been thy eyn than is wyne  
The gardyne is closid al aboute  
Come forth my swete spouse oute of doute  
Thou hast me boundyd in myn hert o wylf  
No spot of the ne knelbe I in al my lyl  
Come forth & leet vs take our dysport  
I ches for the my wylf & for my confort  
Suche olde selde word is vsid he  
On Dampayn a signe made he  
That he shold go heform with hys chikket  
Thys Dampayn hath opened the wylket  
And in he stert and that in suche manere  
That no wight myght it se ne here  
And styll he sat vnder a bush anone  
Thys January as blynd is as a stone

## The marchauntes tale

With may in hys hondz andz no lvyght mo  
In to thys fressh gardyn is he go  
Andz clappidz to the lvyket sodenly  
Nolw lvyf quodz he hys nys but thou andz I  
That art the creature that I best loue  
For by that lordz that sit vs alle aboue  
I hadde leuyt ryght nolw dye on a knyf  
Than the offenden myn olben dze lvyf  
For goddis sake thynk thou y the ckes  
Not for couetyse ne other goodz doutlesse  
But only for the loue I hadde to the  
Andz though that I be olde & may not se  
We to me trewe andz I wol telle the why  
Certis thre thyngis sholde ye lvyne thereby  
Fyrst loue of cryst andz to your self honour  
Andz al myn herytage lothe toun andz toun  
I geue it you makyth chartres as you lyst  
Thys shal he do to morow or the sonne rise  
So lvyf godz my soule brynge to hys  
Andz I pray you of couenaunt ye me kys  
Andz though I be jelous lvyt me nought  
Ye be so dze pyntidz in my thought  
That whan I consider your beaute  
Andz therlvyth al the vnlikelidz of me  
I may not certis though I sholdz dy  
Forlere to been out of your company  
For verry loue thys is lvythouten doute  
Nolw kys me lvyf andz late vs come aboute  
Thys fressh may whan she the lvydis herde  
Wenygnely to January answerde  
Wnt first andz forwarde she legan to wepe  
I haue quodz she a soule forto kepe  
As wel as ye andz also myn honour  
Andz of my lvyfthode that tender fleur  
Whych that I haue assuredz in your hondz  
Whan that the preest to you my body bondz  
Wherefore I wol answer in thys manere  
With the leue of you my lordz so dze

## The marchauntes tale

I pray to god that neuer dalbe that day  
That I ne sterue as foule as womman may  
If euer I do to my kyn that shame  
Or eelis that I empyre so my name  
That I be fals and yf I do that lakk  
Do stripe me and put me in a sack  
And in the nexte Fyuer do me drenelke  
I am a gentyl womman and no benelke  
Why speke ye thus but men be euer vntrelke  
And wommen haue reproof of you ay nelke  
Ye can none other commynycacion I leue  
But speke to vs of vntrust & vs reueue  
And with that word she salu wher Dampayn  
Sat in a bush and knelke he began  
And with hyr fyngrs signes made she  
That Dampayn shold clymke vp on a tre  
That charged was with fawt & vp he went  
For verely he knelke al her entent  
And euery signe that she coude make  
Wel bet than January her olben make  
For in a lettyr she had told hym al  
Of thys matere how he wyrcelke shal  
And thus I let hym sitte in the per  
And January with may Fompyng mery

**B**right was the sonne & blew y firmament  
Merbus of gold dou his kempys hath sent  
To gladen euery flour with hys warmnesse  
He was that tyme in geminis as I gesse  
But lytyl fro hys declynacion  
Of Cancer iouis exaltacion  
And so it fylle that in a bright morow tye  
That in the gardyn on the fertyr side  
Pluto that is kyng of the fayre  
And many a lady in hys companie  
Foolbyng hys wyf the quene proserpyne  
Eke after othe ryght as ony lyne  
Whilis that she gadrid flouris in a mede  
In claudyan ye may the storyes rede

## The marchauntes tale

Holb in hys gryssly cart he her sette  
Thys kyng of feyre adoun hym sette  
Up on a bench of turves fayr and grene  
And ryght anone sayd he thus to hys quene  
My wyf quod he ther may no wyght say nay  
The experience so prouyth it euery day  
The treson whych that wommen do to men  
Ten hundryd thousand tellyn I can  
Ensamplis of your vntrouth and brotylnes  
O Salamon wyse & ryght of alle rickes  
Fulfylled of sappence and of wordly ghorpe  
Wel worthy be thy wordis in memory  
To euery wyght that wyt & reson can  
Thus preyth he yet the hounte of man  
Amonge a thousand men yet fond I one  
But of alle wymmen fond he neuer none  
Thus said þe kyng þe so knowith your wickednes  
And ihesus filius Sirach as I gesse  
He speketh of you but seldyn reuerence  
A wyld fyre and a corrupt pestilence  
So falle on your bodies yet to nyght  
He se ye not thys honourable knyght  
By cause alas that he is blynd and old  
Hys olben man shal make hym cokold  
So where he sit the lechour in the tre  
Nolb wol I graunte of my mageste  
Unto thys old blynde worthy knyght  
That he shal haue open hys eyen sight  
Whan that hys wyf wolde do hym vyllonye  
Than shal he knowe al her harbotrye  
Both in reproof of her and other mo  
Ye shal quod Proserpina and wol ye so  
Nolb by my modris soule sire I swere  
That I shal geue her suffyaunt answere  
And alle wommen after for her sake  
Though they be in ony gylt y take  
Wyth face bold they shal hym self excuse  
And kepe hym down that wolde hem accuse

## The marchauntes tale

For lack of answer none of hem shul dyen  
Al hadde he seen a thyng wyth bothe hys eyen  
Yet shul we wymmen so dysage it hardely  
And wyse and slybere and chyde subtylly  
So that ye men shul be as leldy as gees  
What reckyth me of your autoritees  
I woot wel thys jelwe thys Salamon  
Fondy of vs wommen mo foolis than on  
But thoug he ne fondy no goody womman  
Yet haue ther founden many another man  
Wommen ful trewe ful goody and vertuous  
Wytnes of hem that dwelle in crystes hous  
Wyth martirdom they preydy theyr constaunce  
The Romayn gestes eke make remembraunce  
Of many a very trewe wyf also  
But sit he be not wroth also  
Al though he sayd he fond no goody womman  
I pray you take the sentence of the man  
He ment thus that in souereyn hounte  
Nys none but god that sittyth in tryumpe  
Es for very god that wys but on  
What make ye so muche of Salamon  
What though he made a tempyl goddis hous  
What though he were ryche and glayous  
So made he eke a tempyl of false goddis  
How myghte he do a thyng y more forboode is  
Parde as fayre as ye hys name enplastre  
He was a lechour and eke an ydolaster  
And in hys elde he very god forsook  
And yf god ne had as sayth the book  
Ysparyd for hys fadris sake he shold  
Haue lost hys regne rather than he wold  
I yeue right nought of al the beloupe  
That he of wommen wyrttyth a butter flye  
I am a womman nedis I must speke  
Or ellis swelle tyl myn hert to breke  
For sithen ye say that we be Janglecessis  
As euer I moot broke hool my tressis

## The marchauntes tale

I shal not spare nold for no curtesye  
To speke hym harm that wold be belonpe  
Dame quod this pluto be no longer brotth  
I geue it vp but syth I sweer myn oth  
That I wyl graunte hym his sighte ageyn  
My word shal stonde I say you certeyn  
I am a kyng it sit me not to lye  
And I a quene quod she of the feyre  
Her answer shal she haue I vnder take  
Let be no mo wordis here of make  
For soth I wol you no longer contraye  
Nold let be turue apen to january  
That in the gardyn wyth his fresch may  
Syngeth ful merper than the Dopyngcay  
Polb loue I kest and shal and othyr none  
So longe aboute the aleys is he goone  
Tyl he was come apens that ilk per  
Where as this Dampayn sittyth ful mery  
And hygh amonge the fresch leys grene  
This fresch may that is so bryght and sheene  
Can forto sighe and sayd alas my syde  
Nold syre quod she for aught that may ketyde  
I muste haue of the peris that I se  
Or I must dye so sore longyth me  
To ete of the smale peris grene  
Help for hyr loue that is of heuen quene  
I telle you wel a woman in my plyt  
May haue in fuyt so gret an appetyt  
That she may dyen but she of it haue  
Alas quod she that I ne hadde here a knaue  
That coude clymbe alas alas quod she  
That I am blynd ye sire no force quod she  
But wold ye vouchsaf for goddis sake  
The per wyth ynne your armys forto take  
For wel I boot that ye mistruste me  
Than shold I clymbe wel ynough quod she  
So I my feet myght sette vp on your hys  
Certis quod she therof shal be no lak

## The marchauntes tale

Mpyghte I you helppyn wyth myn lerte blood?  
He stouppth adoun and on hys lute stode  
And caughte her by a tlypste & vp she goth  
Ladyes I pray you be not wroth  
I can not glose I am a rude man  
And sodenly anone thys Dampayn  
Gan pulle vp the smok & in he thronge  
And whan that Pluto saib that wronge  
To January gaf ayeen hys sighte  
And made hym se as wel as euer he myghte  
And whan y he had caught hys sight agayn  
He was there noman of thyng so fayn  
But on hys wyf hys thought was euer mo  
Wp to the tre he cast hys euen tbo  
And saib how dampayn hys wyf hath dressyd  
In such maner it may not be expressyd  
W yf I wolde speke vncourtesyly  
Out helpe alas howe he gan cry  
O strange lady howe what dost thou  
And she answered spere what clyth you  
Haue patience and wsen in your mynde  
I haue you holppyn on bothe your euen blynde  
Wp peril of my soule I shal not lye  
As me was taught to seke wyth your euen  
Was nothyng bet to make you to se  
Than for to stogyl wyth a man in a tre  
God boote I dede it in ful good entent  
Stogyl quod he ye algate in it went  
God you yeue both: a shampes deth to dyen  
He dyde the so I saib it wyth myn euen  
And ellis I be hangyd by the hals  
Than is quod she my medecyne fals  
For certaynly yf ye myght see  
Ye wolde not sen thysse wordes to me  
Ye haue some glymsynge and no parfit sight  
I see quod he as wel as euer I myght  
Thankyd he god wyth bothe myn euen tbo  
And by my trolbthe me thoughte he dyd so

## The marchauntes tale

Ye maas good? sere quod? she  
Thys thank haue I for I made you se  
Alas quod? she that cupr I was so kynde  
Nolb dame quod? he lat al passe out of mynde  
Come down my leef and? yf I haue myssayde  
God? help me so as I am euyl apayde  
But by my fader soule I wente haue seyn  
Holt that thys Dampayn had? by the leyn  
And? that thy smok he leyde upon hys brest  
Ye sere god? she ye may bene as ye lost  
But sere quod she a mā y wakith of his sleep  
He may not so sodenly take sleep  
Wp on a thyng? ne se it so parfittly  
Tyl that he be wel adalbed? veryly  
Ryght so a man that longe blynde hath be  
He may not sodenly so sone wel se  
First when hys sight is welcom agayn  
As he that hath a day or tweyne y seyn  
Tyl that your sighte y fatchid? be a whyle  
Eter may ful many a sighte you begyle  
Welbaar I pray you for by trouyn kyng?  
Ful meny a man benyth to see a thyng?  
And? yet it is al another than it semyth  
He that mysconceyuet? ofte mys demyth  
And? wyth that word? she lepte fro the tre  
Thys January who is glad? but he  
He kysseth her and? clyppyth her ful ofte  
And? on her wombe he stryketh her ful softe  
And? to hys Paleys hoorn he hath her lade  
Nolb good? men I pray you be mery & glad?  
Thus endyth here my tale of January  
God? blisse be alle and? hys moder Mary

Here endeth the Marchauntes tale/ And?  
foloweth the prologe of the squyers

## The squyer Prologe

**O**ur hoste in his sciowp is stondith anon  
And said godmen hearkeneth euerichon  
This was a sherp tale for the nonys  
Syr parissch preest quod he for goddis honys  
Tel us a tale as was thy forwarde yore  
I se wel that laboured men in hore  
Enolbe moche thyngs by goddis dygnyte  
The person hym answered benedycte  
What cplyth the man so synfully to sware  
Our hoste answered o Jankyn be ye there  
I smelle a colere in the wynde quod he  
Nolb good men quod our hoste hearkeneth me  
A thyngth for goddis dygne passioun  
For we shul haue nolb a predicoun  
Thys colere wol preche us here sumilwhat  
May by my fader soule that shal he not  
Saye the Squyer he shal not here preche  
He shal no gospel glose here ne teche  
We leue alle in the grete god quod he  
He wolde solwe some difficulte  
Or spryngen cokyl in our elene corn  
And therefore hoste I warne the before  
My Joly body shal a tale telle  
And I shal clynke yow so mery a kelle  
That it shal wakyn al thys company  
But it shal not be of philosophy  
He of physicas ne termes queynte of talde  
There is but tytel latyn in my malde

## The Squyeres tale



Here begynneth the squyeres tale

**A**t surrey in the land of Tartarye  
There dwellyd a kyng that warryd rissy  
Thorow whych there dyde many a doughty man  
Thys nobyl kyng was clepyd Cambuscan  
Whych in hys tyme was of so gret renoun  
That ther was noblere in no regioun  
So excellent a lord in alle thyng  
He lackyd nought that longed to a kyng  
As of the seate of whych he was born  
He kepte hys lay to whych he was born  
And therto he was hardy wyse and ryche  
Pytous iuste and alwey p lyche  
Soth of hys word kyngne and honourable  
Of hys corage as ony center stabyl

## The Squyers tale

Ponge fressh stronge in armes desirous  
As ony bachelor dwellynge in hys hous  
A fayr persone he was and fortunate  
And kepte alway so wel kyng astate  
That there was noblere such a man  
Thys nobyl kyng thys tartre Cambuscan  
He hadde thre sones on althre hys wyf  
Of whiche the eldest hyghte Algarsif  
That othyr sone was clepyd Camballo  
A daughter hadde thys worthy kyng also  
That yongest was and hyghte Canace  
But for to telle you of hys beaute  
It lyth not in my tunge nyr my connyng  
I dar not take on me so hygh a thyng  
And also myn englyssh eke is insuffycent  
It muste be a clerk and a rethour excellent  
That shalbe the colour longynge to that art  
If he sholde dyscrye her in euery part  
I am no such I must speke as I can  
And so befyl thys Cambuscan  
Hath thienty wynter fore hys dyademe  
As he wente fro peer to peer y deme  
He leet the feste of hys natyuyte  
Done aye thorow out saray the cyte  
The laste iouis of marche after the peer  
Wher the sonne ful joly was and cleer  
For he was nyght hys exaltacion  
In martis face and in hys mansion  
In aries the hote colerik signe  
Ful lusty was the weþyr and kenyngne  
For wher the foules avenes the sonne shene  
What for the seson and the yonge grene  
Full loude songen here affections  
Them semyd to getyn them protections  
Agayn the siberd of wynter lene and cold  
Thys Cambuscan of whiche I you told  
In ryal bestymentis sat on hys deys  
Wyth dyademe ful hygh in hys paleys

## The Squyers tale

And holte hys feste so solempne and ryche  
That in thys world was there none it lyche  
Of whyche yf I shold telle al the way  
Than wold it occupie a someris day  
And eke it nedyth not to deuyse  
At euery cours the ordre of hys scrupse  
I wol not telle of hys strange sellys  
Ne of hys swannys ne of hys conselbis  
Eke in that bond as tullen knyghtis olde  
Is some mete that is ful deynce holde  
That in thys bond men recke of it but smal  
There is noman that may reporten alle  
I wol not tarpe you for it is pryue  
And for it is no fauyt but los of tyme  
Wnto my first tale I wol haue my recours  
And so besyde that after the thrydde cours  
Whyle thys kyng sat thus in hys nobleys  
Herkenyng his mynstrallis hys thynges pleye  
Besorn hym at hys lord deliciausly  
In at the halle dore all sodenly  
There came a knyght vpon a steed of bras  
And in hys hond a brood myrrour of glas  
Vpon hys thombe he had of gold a ryng  
And by hys syde a nakyd swerd hangyng  
And by he rydyth to the hygh lord  
In al the halle he was there spoke a word  
For meruayll of thys knyght hym to beholde  
And bysely they wayten yonge and olde  
The straunge knyght that cam so sodenly  
Al armed saue hys hed ful fychely  
Saluyth kyng quene and lordis alle  
By ordre as they sitten in the halle  
Wyth so hygh reuerence and okeysaunce  
As wel in speche as in contaunce  
That Galben wyth hys olde curtesye  
Though he were come ageyn out of feiry  
He coude hym amende wyth a word  
And after thys before the hygh lord

## The Squyers tale

He wyth manly voyce sayd hys message  
Aftyr the fourme vsed in hys langage  
Wythoute wyte of sillabyl or lettyr  
And for hys tale shold some the lettyr  
Accordant to hys wordys was hys chere  
As techyth art of specke hem that it were  
Al be it that I can not solue hys style  
Ne I can not clymbe on so hygh an style  
Than say I thus to the comyn entent  
Thus much amountyth al that he ment  
If it so be that I haue it in mynde  
He sayd the kyng of arabye and of ynde  
My lyege lord on thys solempne day  
Sale weth yow as he best can and may  
And sendyth you honour at your feste  
By me that am al redy at your beste  
Thys stede of bras that esely and wel  
Can in the space of a day naturel  
Thys is to say in four & twenty houre  
Wher you lyst in droughte or in shoure  
Were your body in to euery place  
To whiche your herte wylleth forto passe  
Wythoute hem of you thorough foul or fayr  
Or yf you lyst to fle as hygh in the ayre  
As doth an eagle whan hym lyst to soke  
Thys same stede shal bere you euermore  
Wythoute harm tyl ye be there ye lyst  
Though that ye slepe on hys back or reste  
And turne ageyn wyth wythynge of a yere  
He that it brought couthe many a gyn  
He waytyd many a constellacion  
Or he had brought thys operacion  
And knelbe meny a scal and meny a bonde  
Thys myghtour eke that I haue in myn honde  
Hath suche a myght that men may in it se  
Whan ther shal falle any aduersite  
Onto your regne or vnto your self also  
And openly why is your frend or foe

## The Squyers tale

And ouer al thys yf ony lady bryght  
Had set her herte on ony maner wyght  
If he be false she shal hys treson see  
Hys nelve true and al hys subtyltye  
So openly that ther shal no thyng hyde  
Wherfore agayns thys lusty someris tyde  
Thys myrour and thys ryng as ye may se  
He sente hath to my lady Canace  
Your excellent doughter that is here  
The vertu of thys ryng yf ye wol here  
Is thys yf that he lyst it for to bere  
Up on her thombe or in her purs it here  
There is no foul that fleeth vnder heuyn  
That she ne shal vnderstonde hys seuyng  
And knolwe hys menyng openly and playn  
And answer hym in hys langage agayn  
And euery graue that growyth vpon the rote  
She shal knolwe and whom it wol do tote  
Al be hys wounde neuer so deep or wyde  
Thys nakyd slyberd that kyngeth by my syde  
Suche vertu hath what man ye smyte  
Theroll out hys armure it wol kerue & byte  
Were it as thicke as a fraunchyd ook  
And what man is wounded wyth the serook  
He shal neuer be wol tyl ye lyst of grace  
To stroke hym wyth the plat in the same place  
There he is hurt that is as myght to sayn  
Ye moot wyth the plat slyberd agayn  
Stroke hym in the wounde and it wol close  
Thys is a veray soth wythouten glose  
It kyleth not whytis it is in your holde  
And when þ knyght hath thus hys tale tolde  
He rood out of the halle & down he lighte  
Hys steed which þ shoon as the sonne bryght  
Stont in the court styll as ony stoon  
Thys knyght in to the chambr is led anon  
And is vnarmed and to mete y sette  
The presentis be ryght rychely sette

## The Squyers tale

Thys is to say the slyberdy and the myrrour  
Ween born anone in to the hygh tour  
Wyth certeyn offycers ordeyned therefore  
And vnto Canace thys ryng is bore  
Solempnly there six sat at the tabyl  
But slypely wythouten ony fabyll  
The hors of bras that may not be remeuyd  
It stont as it were in the ground y cleuyd  
They may hyt not out of the place dryue  
For none engynys wyndas ne polyeue  
And cause why for they con not the craft  
And therefore in the place they haue it last  
Tyl y the knyght haue taught hem the manere  
To boyden hym as ye shul aftyr here  
Greet was the pices y slybermyd to and fro  
To galbryn on the hors that stood so  
For it so hygh was so brood & so longe  
So wel proporcioned to be strong  
Ryght as it were a secedy of lumbardye  
Therwyth so horsly and so quyk at eye  
As it a gentyl poleyn courser were  
For certis from hys tayl vnto hys ere  
Nature ne art coude hym not amende  
In no degre as al the pepyl wende  
But euermore her most wonder was  
Holt that it coude go and was of bras  
It was a feyre as al the pepyl sempd  
Dyuers folk dyuersly they demed  
As meny bedes/as meny wyttis ther been  
They mornedyn as doth a swarm of been  
And maken skyllis aftyr her fantesye  
Kellersynge of the oldy poeete  
And sayd it was lyke the pegase  
The hors that had wyngis for to fle  
Or ellis it was the grekis hors Synon  
That brought troye vnto destruction  
As men in thys olde gestis rede  
Myght art quod one is euermore in drede

## The Squyres tale

I trow some man of armes be therynne  
That shal leu this cyte for to lye  
It were ight good þ al such thyng were knowe  
Another wolue to his felow bolde  
And sayd he lyed for it was rather lyke  
An apparence maad to some magike  
As jogelours pley at the festis grete  
Of sondry doubtis thus they iangyl and tret  
As selbyd pepyl demen alday comonly  
Of thyngis that been maad more subtilly  
Than they konne in hir selbnes comprehend  
They demyn gladly to the liddre ende  
And some of theym wondryd on the myrour  
That born was by m to the maysteir tour  
Holt men myghte in it such thyngis se  
An other answerd and sayde it may wel be  
Naturally made by compositions  
Of Aungelis and of fly reflections  
And sayd that in Rome was such one  
They spak of abeen and of byt bone  
And of arystotill that wrytyn in hir bryng  
Of queynte myrours and of prospectatyng  
As knowe they that haue hir lokis herd  
And othyr folk haue wondryd on the sterd  
That wol peryssh thorough euery thyng  
And fyl in speck of thelephus the kyng  
And of Achylles wyth his queynte spere  
For he coude wyth it bothe sle and dore  
Right in such wise as men may wyth þ sterd  
Of whiche ryght now ye haue your self herd  
They speken of sondry hardyng of metal  
And speken of medecynes ther wyth al  
And holt and whan it shold hardy be  
Whiche vnkowen is algate to me  
Tho speke they than of Canaces ryng  
And sayd that all such wonder thyng  
Of craft of ryngis herde they neuer non  
Saue that he moyses and kyng Salamon

## The Squyers tale

Hadde a maner connyng of such an art  
Thus seyn the peple and drauwen him a part  
But neuertheles some sayde that it was  
Wonder to make of fern asshe glas  
And yet is glas not lyk asshe of fern  
But for they haue knowe it so fern  
Therefore seith he iangelynge & he wonder  
As sore wondre some on cause of the thundyr  
On ebbe on flood on gossamer and on myste  
And on al thyng tyl the cause is wyst  
Thus iangelyn they and demyn and deuse  
Tyl that the kyng gan from hys bord aryse  
Phobus hath lost the angle merydonal  
And yet ascendynge was the best ryal  
The gentyl houn wyth hys aldryan  
Whan that thys tartre kyng Cambuscan  
Roos from hys bord there he sat ful hie  
Before hym goth the lord mynstralcye  
Tyl that he cam to hys chambyr of parmentis  
There as they solbyn dyuers instrumentis  
That is lyk an heuen for to here  
Nolb daunsen lusty Venus chyl dren dre  
For in the fyssh he lady sat ful hie  
And lokyth on hem wyth a frendly eye  
Thys nobyl kyng is set vp on hys throne  
Thys straunge knyght is fet to hym ful sone  
And on the daunce he goth wyth Canace  
Here is the reuel and the jolyte  
That is nat aby a dul man to deuse  
He muste haue knowe loue and hys scrupse  
And he a fessliche man as fressh as may  
That shul you deusen such aray  
How coude you telle the fourme of daunses  
So vncouth and so fressh contrauntes  
Such subtil lokynge and dysympleynge  
For drede of Iehoues mennys perspyngis  
No man but Launcelot and he is ded  
Therefore I passe ouer of al thys lustyked

## The Squyres tale

I say nomore but in thys Iolynesse  
I lette hym tyl men to supper hym dresse  
The stylward byddyth sprais forth hys  
And eke the wyne in alle thys methode  
The vssers and the squyere ben gon  
The spais and the wyne is comen anon  
They ete & drynke & whan thys was at ende  
Wnto the tempyl as wson was they wende  
The scruple don they soupen al by day  
What nedyth me to reherce here away  
Eche man boote wel that a kyngis feste  
Hath plente to the moste and to the leste  
And deyntes moo than he in my knolynge  
And aftyr supper goth thys nobyl kyng  
To see thys hors of bras wpyth all the route  
Of lordis and of ladyes hym aboute  
Suche wondryng was ther of this hors of bras  
That sethen the grette sege of troye was  
There as men salb such an hors also  
He was there suche wondryng as was tho  
But synally the kyng asked the knyght  
The vertu of thys courser and the myght  
And prayde to talle hym his gouernaunce  
The hors anone gan to tryppe and daunce  
Whan y this knyght leyde hond on hys reyne  
And sayd syre ther is nomore to sayne  
But whan you list to ryden ony where  
Ye muste trylle a pyll that stont in hys ere  
Whyle I shal you telle lettyng ys tilbo  
Ye moot nempne hym to what place also  
Or to what contre that ye lyst to ryde  
And whan ye come there ye lyst abyde  
Wyd hym ascende and trylle another pyll  
For there ynneth the effect of al the gyll  
And he wolde deun ascende and do your wyll  
And in that place he wolde abyde styl  
Ekegh al the world hath the contrary sboze  
He shal not thens be dralbe ne boze

## The Snyuers Prologe

And or yf you lyst bydde hym thens goon  
Trylle thys pyne & he wol banysse anon  
Out of the sight of euery maner wyght  
And come aye he it by day or nyght  
Whan that you lyst clepye hym ager  
In such a gyse as I shal to you seyn  
Betwene me and you and that ryght sone  
Ryde when you lyst there is nomore to done  
Enfourmed whan the kyng was of þe knyght  
And hath conceyued in hys wyte a ryght  
The maner and the fourme of al thys thyng  
Ful glady and blythe was thys nobyl kyng  
Repyryng vnto hys reuel as befor  
The byrdyl is to the tour yborn  
And kept amonge hys jelbeles leef and dene  
The hors banysse I not in what manere  
Out of her sight ye gette nomore of me  
But thus I lete in luste and in jolyte  
Thys Cambuscan hys lordys festyng  
Tyl wel nygh the day began to spryng

Explicit prima pars

Et sequitur pars secunda

**G**he norpce of dygestion the sleep  
Can on he wynte & lud hem take here  
That much mete & labour wol haue rest  
And wyth a gapyng mouth he hem alle keste  
And sayd it was tyme to lye a doun  
For blood was in hys domynacion  
Cherysse blood natures frend quod he  
They thankye hym galpyng by elbo by thre  
And euery wyght gan dralbe hym to hys rest  
As sleep hem lud and toke it for the best  
Here dremps shal not be told for me  
Ful were here feedes of fumosite  
That causith dreme of whiche ther is no charge  
They slepye tyl it was pryne large

## The Squyers tale

The moste part but yf it were Canace  
She was ful mesurable as women be  
For of her fader hath she take her leue  
To go to reste sone after it was eue  
Her list not appalled for to be  
He on the morow vnfestliche for to see  
And slepte her fyrste sleep and albook  
For such a ioye she in her myrrour took  
Bothe of her ryng and of her myrrour  
That twenty tyme she chaungyd colour  
And in her sleep ryght for the impression  
Of her myrrour she had a vision  
Wherefore on the sonne gan vp glyde  
She clepyd vp her maysteresse here beside  
And sayd that her luste for to aryse  
Thyse olde women that ben gladly wyse  
As her maysteresse answered here anon  
And sayd Madame what wyll ye goon  
Thus cry for folk ben alle in reste  
I wol quod she aryse for me leste  
No lengyr sleep but walke aboute  
Her maysteresse clepyth women a greet route  
And vp they risen wel ten or elue  
Up risith fresh Canace her selue  
As rody and bryght as the yonge sonne  
That in the day is four degrees yronne  
No hygher was he whan she rody was  
And forth she walkyth esely a paces  
A rayd after the lusty seson soke  
Lyghtly for to pley and walkyn on fote  
Not but wyth fyue or syxe of her meyne  
And in a trench forth in the park goth she  
The vapour whiche fro the erthe glode  
Makyth the sonne to seme rody and broode  
But neuerthelesse it was fayr of sighte  
That it made all her hertes for to lighte  
What for the seson and the moynynge  
And for the folowis that she herde synge

## The Squires Tale

For ryght anon she wyfte what they ment  
Ryght by her songe and knelbe al her entent  
The knotte why that every tale is told  
If it be taryed tyl the lust be colde  
Of hem that haue it harkened astyr pore  
The sauour passyth and euer lenger the more  
For fulsomnes of hys prolixyte  
And by the same reson thynkyth me  
I sholde vnto the knotte condescende  
And make of her walkyng sone an ende  
A mydde a treford ryde as whyte as chaske  
As Canace was pleyng in her walk  
There sat a falcon ouer her hed ful hye  
That wyth a pytous voyce so gan to crye  
That al the wood resounded of her crye  
And beten hadde here self so pytouslye  
Wyth bothe her wyngis tyl the reed blood  
Ran endlonge the tre there as she stood  
And euer in one she cryde allwey and shrigh  
And wyth her beak her self to twyght  
That ther nas tygre nor so cruel best  
That dwellyth other in wood or in forest  
That nold haue wepte yf he wepe coude  
For sorow of her shrifte allwey so bolde  
For ther was neuer yet man on lyue  
Yf that he coude a fauon wel descriue  
That herde of such another of feynes  
As wel of plumage as of gentylnes  
Of shap and alle that myghte rekened be  
A falcon peregryn than semed she  
Of frendz bondz & euermore as she stood  
She sholned noli & noli for lack of blood  
Tyl wel nygh is she fallen fro the tre  
Thys fayr kyngis daughter Canace  
That on her fynger haue the queynt rynge  
Thorow which she vnderstood wel every thyng  
That ony foul may in hys leden syn  
And coude answer in hys leden agayn

## The Squyers tale

Hath vnderstonde what thys faucon seide  
And wel nygh for the routhe almost she deyde  
And to the tre she goth ful hastily  
And on thys faucon lokyth ful pryncely  
And held her lappe a broode for wel she wiste  
The faucon muste falle fro the wyeste  
Whan that it wolbmed next for lack of blood  
A longe whyle to wayte there she stood  
Tyl at the laste she spak in thys manere  
Unto the hylke as ye shul after here  
What is the cause yf it be for to telle  
That ye be in thys furial pyne of helle  
Quod Canace vnto thys hauke aboue  
Is thys sorow of deth or losse of loue  
For as I trow thys been the causis two  
That causen most a gentyl herte wo  
Of other harm it rekkyth not to speke  
For ye your self vpon your self ye wreke  
Whiche preynt wel that othyr loue or drede  
Not be encheyson of your cruel dede  
Syn that I se none other wyght you chace  
For loue of god so do your self grace  
Or what may be your help for west ne east  
Salv I neuyr or noll bryde nor best  
That ferde wyth hym self so pryncely  
Ye sle me wyth your sorow veryly  
I haue of you so gret compassion  
For goddis loue come fro the tre a down  
And as I am a kynges daughter trewe  
If that I veryly the causis kenne  
Of your dysce yf it lay in my myght  
I wolde amende it or it were nyght  
As wyse help me grete god of kynde  
And herbis shal I ryght ynolb fynde  
To hele wyth your hurt so hastily  
Tho shryght thys faucon yet more pryncely  
Than euer she dyde & fyl to ground anon  
And liff as wolbne as dede as ony stoon

## The Squeyers Tale

Eyl Canace hath in her lappe here take  
Unto tyme she gan out of her swolne alwake  
And after that she out of slouyn gan brayde  
Ryght in her halles leden thus she sayde  
That yett rennyth sone in gentyl herte  
Felynge hys symplite in paynes smerte  
Is prouyd alday as men may se  
As wel by werk as by auctoryte  
For gentyl herte kydyth gentylnesse  
I se wel that ye haue of my dyscesse  
Compassioun my fayre Canace  
Of berry wommanly kynngnyte  
That nature in your pryncples hath set  
But for no hope forty fare the let  
But forth okepe to your herte fre  
And forth make other be waar by me  
As by the the whelp chastyse is the lyon  
Ryght for that cause and that conclusion  
Whyle that I haue lesse and spaas  
My harm I wyl confesse er I paas  
And euer whyle that one her sorow tolde  
That othyr wepte as she to water wolde  
Eyl that the faucon ludy hys be styl  
And wyth a sygh thus she sayd her wyll  
There I was bred alas that hardy day  
And fostered in a rocke of marbyle gray  
So tenderly that nothyng ayld me  
I ne wyte what was aduersite  
Eyl I coude fle ful hye vnder the sky  
Tho dwellyd a taryet me faste by  
That semed wel of al gentylnes  
Al were he ful of treson and falsnes  
It was so wrappid vnder humble chere  
And vnder hue of trouthe in such manere  
Vnder plesaunce and vnder lesy payne  
That I ne coude haue wend he coude feyne  
So depe in greyn he dyed hys colours  
Ryght as a serpent hydyth hym vnder flours

## The Snykers tale

Tyl he may se hys tyme forth lye  
Ryght so this god of loue Jpocryte  
Doth so hys serymones & hys okeysauncis  
Ande ker yth in semblaunce al his obseruauncis  
That solbneith vnto gentylnesse of loue  
As in a tombe is al the feyr aboue  
Ande vnder is the corpe sucke as yf boote  
Sucke was thys Jpocryte bothe cold & hoot  
Ande in thys wyse he scrupyd hys entent  
That saue the fende none wyste what he ment  
Tyl he so longe hadde wept & compleyned  
Ande meny a peere his scrupse vnto me feyned  
Tyl that my herte to pryue ande to nyce  
Al innocent of hys colbned malice  
For ferde of hys deeth as thoughte me  
Wp on hys othys ande hys suerte  
Graunted hym loue vpon thys condicion  
That euermo myn honour ande my renoun  
Were saued bothe pryue ande apert  
Thys is to seyn that after hys deeth  
I gaf hym al my herte ande al my thought  
Good boote ande he & other wyse nought  
Ande toke hys herte in charge of myn for ay  
But soth is sayd goon seth is many a day  
A trelve wyght ande a theef thynke not one  
Ande whan he saw the thyng so fer agone  
That I had grauntyd hym my loue  
In sucke a wyse as I haue sayd aboue  
Ande geue hym my trelve herte as fere  
As he shood he gaf hys herte to me  
Anone thys wyse ful of deubylnesse  
Fell on his knees wyth so gret humblenesse  
Wyth hygh reuerence ande as by hys chere  
So lyk a gentyl louer of manere  
So rauysshed as it semed for the joye  
That neuer Troylus ne Paris of Troye  
Lason certis ne none other man  
Eyn sameth was that alderfirst began

## The Snyuers Tale

To ouen tibo as wryten folk befor  
He neuer sith that first man was born  
He couthe man by tiben ty thousand part  
Counterfete the sophymes of hys art  
He worthy to vnsokelen hys gabche  
There doublenes or faynyng shold appoche  
He so couthe thonke a wyght as he dyd me  
Hys maner was an heuen for to see  
To ony homman were he neuer so wyse  
So payntydy he hys chere at poynt deuyce  
As wel hys wordis as hys contaunce  
And so I louedy hym for hys okeysaunce  
And for the trolthe y demedy in hys lert  
That yf so were that ony thyng hym smert  
Al were it neuer so lyte and I it wiste  
Me thoughte I felte deth at my herte wiste  
And shortly so ferforth this thyng is went  
That my wyl was hys wyllis instrument  
Thys is to sey my wyl okeped to hys wyl  
In alle thyng as fer as reson fyl  
Keepyng the boundis of my worschyp euer  
He neuer had I thyng so leef ne leuer  
As hym godd woot ne neuer shal noma  
Thys lastydy lenger than a peer or tibo  
That I supposydy of hym nothyng but good  
But fynally thus at the laste it stood  
That fortune wolde that he must wynne  
Out of that place whych I was ynn  
Where me was woo it is no questioun  
I can not make of it descripcioun  
For o thyng dar I telle boldy  
I knowe what the payne of deth is therby  
Such harm I fette that he ne myght fleue  
So on a day of me he took hys leue  
So sorowfully eke that he wende veryly  
That he hadde felt as muche sorow as I  
When that I herd hym speke & say hys selve  
But neuerthelesse I thoughte he was so trewe

## The Squyeres tale

Ande eke that he repayre shold agayn  
Wyth yune a lytyl whyle soth to sayn,  
Ande reson wolde eke that he moste go  
For hys honour ande ofte it fallyth so  
That I made vertu of necessity  
Ande took it wel syn it nedes muste be  
As I best myght I hyde fro hym my sorow  
Ande took hym by þe hond seynt John to sorow  
Ande I sayde thus to I am youris al  
We ye such as I haue be to you ande shal  
What he answered nedyth not to tellyn  
Who can say bet than he that can do wers  
Whan he hath al sayde than hath he doon  
Therefore behoueth hym to haue a longe spoon  
That shal ete wyth a fend thus herd I say  
So atte laste he muste forth hys way  
Ande forth fleyth tyl he come thre hym leste  
Whan it cam hym to purpos for to reste  
I trow he hadde the text in mynde  
That al thyngz repyringe to hys kynde  
Gladyth hym self thus sey men as I gesse  
Men loue of propre kynde welbefangynesse  
As byddis doon that men in cages fede  
For theyr thou myght e day take of hem lede  
Ande smalle her cage feyre e soft as silk  
Ande geue hem suger honny bred ande mylk  
Yet ryght anone as that hys dore is op  
He wyth hys feet spurneth down hys cup  
Ande to the wood he wol ande wormes ete  
So welbefangyl ben they of her mete  
Ande loue nouelties of proper kynde  
No gentylnesse of blood may hym bynde  
So ferde thys Caraket allas the day  
Though he were gentyl born fressh ande gay  
Ande goodly forto see humble ande fre  
He sal by on a tyme a kyte fle  
Ande sodenly he sounde thys kyte so  
That al hys loue is clene fro me go

## The squyers tale

And hath hye trouthe falsid in thys wyse  
Thus hath the kyte my loue in hyr sorowse  
And I am loyn wythoute remedy  
And wyth that word thys falcon gan to cry  
And swounded est in canacees arm  
Greet was the sorow for the falbkeis harm  
That Canace and all her women made  
They nyte hyl they myght the falcon glade  
But Canace hom beryth her in her lappe  
And softly in plasteris gan her wrappe  
There as she wyth her lek had hurt her selue  
Now can not Canace but herbis delue  
Out of the ground and make salues nelbe  
Of herbis precious and fyne of helbe  
To hele wyth the falbke fro day to nyght  
She doth her lesynes and al her myght  
And by her beddis bed she made a melbe  
And couered it wyth beluctis slelbe  
In signe of trouthe that is in women seen  
And al wythout the melbe is penytyd green  
In whych were penytyd al thys false foules  
As been thys tidffis tarcellis and olblis  
Ryght for despyt were penytyd her beside  
Pyes on theym for to aye and to chyd  
Thus lette I Canace her falbke lepyng  
I wol as now nomore speke of her ryng  
Tyl it come est to purpoos for to sayn  
Holt that thys falcon gal her loue agayn  
Repentyng as the story telleth vs  
By mediacion of cambalus  
The kyngis sone of whych I you told  
But hens forth I wol my processe hold  
To speken of auenturis and of kataylis  
That yet was neuer herde so grette meruayllis  
First I wol you telle of Cambuscan  
That in hys tyme many a kyte wan  
And after wyl I speke of algarsyf  
Holt that he wan theodora to hys wyf

## The Squyers tale

For whom ful ofte in greet peryl he was  
Ne hadde he he holppn by the hors of bras  
And aftyr wol I speke of Camballo  
That faught in liseis wyth bretheren ilbo  
For Canace or that he myghte here bynne  
And there I lefte I wol aȝen begynne

Explicit secunda pars

Inapit pars tercia

**A**pollo whyrith vp hys char so hygh  
Tyl that god Mercuryus hous the sigh

Ther is nomore of the squyers tale

The wordes of the frankleyns

**I**n fyrth squyer thou hast the wel y quyt  
And gentylly I prayse wel thy wyte  
Quod þ frankleyn cōsideryng thy yowthe  
So felynghly thou spekest/ Syr I allowthe  
As to my dome ther nys none that is here  
Of Eloquence that shal be thy pere  
Yf that thou lyue godȝ grue the right goodȝ chauce  
And in vertu sende the contynuaunce  
For of thy speche I haue ryght grette deynce  
I haue a sone/ And by the tynpte  
I hadȝ leuer than tlyenty poundȝ worth sonde  
Though it right nobȝ were fallen in my honde  
He were a man of such dyscrecion  
As that ye ben/ Fry on possession  
But yf a man be vertuous wyth all  
I haue my sone synnedȝ/ andȝ yet shal  
For he to vertu lysteth not tēdēde  
But for to pleye at dysce andȝ dyspende  
And lese al that he hath/ is hys vsage  
Andȝ he hadȝ leuer talken wyth a page

## The Frankeleyns Prologe

Than to compne wyth ony gentyl wyght  
 Whtre he myght lerne gentylnes aryght  
 Scall for your gentylnesse quod? tho our host  
 Wht frankeleyn parde/ Syr wel thou woost  
 That eke of you mot tellen at the lest  
 A tale or tbo/ or breken hys telfste  
 That knolwe I wel sire quod? thys frankeleyn  
 I pray you haue ye not me in desceyn  
 Though to thys man I speke a word or tbo  
 Telle on thy tale wythout wordes mo  
 Gladly sir host quod? he I wyl obeye  
 Wnto your wyll/ Now herkene wht I sepe  
 I wyl you not contrayen in no wyse  
 As fer as that my wytt wyl suffyse  
 I pray to god? that it may plesen yow  
 Than woost I wel that it is good? ynolw

Here begynneth the Frankeleyns prologe

**G**ylse old? gentyl britons in her dayes  
 Of dyuers auctours maden her layes  
 Rymed? fyrst in her olben bryton tunge  
 Suche layes wyth her instrumentis they sung  
 Or ellis wddyn hem for her plesaunce  
 And? one of hem haue I in remembraunce  
 Whych I shal say wyth a goood wyl as I can  
 But sire by cause I am a borel man  
 At my begynnynge first I you beseeche  
 Haue me excusid? of my rude speche  
 I lernyd? neuer rethorik in certayn  
 Thynge that I speke muste be sure and? pleyen  
 I slepte neuer in the mount of rernafo  
 Ne lerned? marcus Tullius ne Et tixo  
 Colubris knolwe I noon wythouten drede  
 But suche colouris as growen in the mede

## The Frankeleynstale

Oz ellis suche as men dyen oz peynce  
Colours of rethoryk be to me queynce  
My spryte felyth in no suche matere  
But ande ye lyst my tale shul ye here

Here endyth the Frankeleyns prologe  
Ande here begynneth hys tale



**I**n Armoryk that callyd is Brytayne  
Ther was a knyght that buyd e dede his payne  
To serue ladyes in hys best wyse  
Ande many a labour ande many a grette emprise  
He for hys lady brought or she was wonne  
For she was one the fayrest in oer sonne  
Ande eke thereto comyn of so yegh kynrede  
That wel vnnethe durste the knyght for drede

## The Frankelynes tale

Telle here howe hys wo hys payne and hys dyscre  
But atte laste six for hys worthynes  
And namely for hys meke obeyssaunce  
Hath such appetyt caught of hys penaunce  
That she pryncely fyl of hys accorde  
To take hym for hys husband and hys worde  
Of such lordship as me haue ouer hir wyue  
And for to lede in the more blysse her lyue  
Of his fre wyf he wooz her as a knyght  
That neuer in al hys lyf he day ne nyght  
He sholdy vpon hym take no maysterye  
Ageyns her wyf ne kythe her jelousy  
But her obeye and folowe her wyf in al  
As ony louer to hys lady shal  
Saue that the name of soueraynte  
That wolde he haue for shame of hys degre  
She thankyth hym of hys humblenesse  
She sayd syth of your gentylnesse  
Ye profer me to haue so large a payne  
He wolde god neuer betwix vs twayne  
As in my gyfte were othyr were or styf  
Syr I wyf be your humble trewe wyf  
Haue here my trouthe tyl my laste breste  
Thus ben they bothe in quyet and in reste  
For one thyng sires sauely dar I say  
That frendis eueryche other muste obeye  
Yf they wyf lyue in pees and holdy compaignye  
Loue wyf not be constreyned by maysterye  
When maysterye is come the god of loue anon  
Betwix hys wyngis and fere wel it is goon  
Loue is a thyng as ony thought fre  
For women of kynde desyre lyberte  
And nat to be constreyned as a thrall  
And so doth men yf I the sothe telle shal  
Looke who is most pacient in loue  
He is at hys auantage al a loue  
Pacience is an hygh vertu certeyn  
For it benquyssheth as clerkeis seyn

## The Frankelene tale

Thynge is that rigour shal neuer atteyne  
For euery word; man may not chynge or pleyne  
Lernyth to suffer or ellis so mot I goon  
Pe shal it lerne whether so pe wyl or noon  
For in thys world; certeyn no wyght is  
That he ne doth or sayth somtyme amys  
Fre siknes or conspyllacioun  
Wyne woo or chaungynge of complexioun  
Causith ful ofte to do amys or speken  
On euery wrong; a man may not be wrekyn  
Aftyr the tyme must be temperaunce  
To euery wyght that can of gouernaunce  
And; therefore hath thys wyse worthy knyght  
To luygn in case suffraunce hys behyght  
And; so to hym ful wysly gan swere  
That neuer shold; there be default in here  
Here men may see in humble wyse accorde  
Thus hath he take his seruaunt and; his lord;  
Seruaunt in loue and; lord; in maryage  
Than was he bothe in lordship & in seruage  
Seruage nay but in lordship aboue  
Synce he hath bothe hys lady and; hys loue  
Hys lady certis and; hys wyf also  
The wyf that leue of loue accordyth ther to  
And; when he was in thys prosperite  
Home wyth hys wyf he goth to hys contre  
Not fer fro penmark ther hys dwellyng was  
Where as he luyth in blis and; in solas  
Who coude telle but he that weddid; had; he  
The joye the ese and; the prosperite  
That is felicity an husbond; and; hys wyf  
A peccer or more lestyth thys blissful lyf  
Tyl that thys knyght of wyf that I spak thus  
That of kaynde was clepyd; Arueragus  
Shoop hym to goon & dwell a peccer or thwayne  
In Englonde; he clepyd; was eke Brytayne  
To seeke in armys worshyp and; honour  
For al hys lust he sette in such labour

## The Frankeleneys tale

And dwelld there til þe yere þe booke saith thus  
Now wol I seynt of thys Aueragus  
And speke I wol of dozygene hys wyf  
That louyd her husbond as her hertes lyf  
For hys absence wepyth she and sikyth  
As doon thys good wyue when hem sikyth  
She morneth waketh waylyth and playneth  
Desire of hys presence so her dysteyneth  
That al thys wyde world she set at nought  
Her frendis that knelbe her heuy thought  
Conforten her in al that euer they may  
They prechen here they techen here nyght & day  
That causeles she sleth her self alas  
And euery comfort possyble in that caas  
They do to here and al her besynes  
To auoyde her sorow and her heynes  
By processe as ye knolben euerychon  
Men wolbe so longe graue in a stoon  
Tyl some fygure ther ynn printede be  
So longe haue they comforted her tyl she  
Recouered hath by hope and by reason  
The enpryntinge of her consolacion  
Thorow which her grete sorow begā to asuage  
She may not allway duryn in such arage  
And eke Aueragus in al thys care  
Hath sente her lettris home of hys welfare  
And that he wol come hastely agayn  
Or ellis hath thys sorow her hert slayn  
Her frendes sal here sorowes gan for to slake  
And prayd her on their knees for goddis sake  
To come and Fome her in companye  
Alwey to dryuen her with fantasie  
And fynally she grauntyd that requeste  
For wel she salbe it was for the beste  
Now stood her castel faste by the see  
And ofte wyth her frendis walkyth she  
Here forth dysporte vpon the bank an hys  
Where as she many shypis and bargis se

## The Frankeleynes tale

Saylyng her cours whete hem lyst to go  
But yet was that a parcel of her wo  
For to her self ful ofte alas sayd she  
Is ther no shyp so many as I see  
Wold her bring hom my lord than were my hert  
Al warpschyd of hys bytter paynes smert  
Anothyr tyme she wold sitte and thynke  
And caste her open downward from the brinke  
But when she salbe the grypsly rockys blake  
For berry feet so wold her herte quake  
That on her feet she myghte not sustene  
Than wold she sit down vp on the grene  
And pytously in to the see beholde  
And sayen right thus with sorowful sightes colde  
O terne god that thorow thy purueaunce  
Ledyst the worlde by certeyn ordenaunce  
In popyl as men say ye no thyng make  
But lord thy grypsly fendly rockys blake  
That solbnen rather vnto foul confusion  
Of werke than to ony fayr creation  
Of such a partyt wyse god and a scabyl  
Why haue ye brought this werk vntreasonabyl  
For by this werk North south west ne est  
There nys y fosterd man ne byrd ne best  
It doth no good to my wyf but annoyeth  
See ye not lord how mankynde it destroyeth  
An hundryd thousand bodies of mankynde  
Haue rockis slayn al though they be not in mynde  
Syn mankynde is so fayr a part of thy werk  
Thou it maad first lyk to thyn olben merk  
Than semyth it ye haue do a gret chyerce  
Tolbard mankynde but how may it than be  
That ye such menys make it to destroyen  
Such menys ne do no good but annoyen  
I boot wel clerkys wol say as hym lyst  
By argumentis that al is for the best  
Though I ne can the causis wel knowe  
But that god that made the wynd to blowe

## The Frankelynes Tale

As kepe my lord; thys is my conclusion  
To clerkis lette I al dysputacion  
But wold; god; that al thysc Fockis blake  
Were sonkyn in to selle for hys sake  
Thysc rockis fle my herte for fear  
Thus wold she say wyth many a pytous tear  
Here frendis salbe that it was no dysport  
To romyn by the see but dyscomfort  
And; shapen forto pley somwylke ellis  
They ledyn here by Fyueris and; by wellis  
And; eke in other places dilectablis  
They daunsyn a pley at the ches & at the tablis  
So one a day right on the morow tyde  
Wnto a gardyn that was there lesyde  
In whiche that they had; made her ordynance  
Of bytayl and; of othyr purueaunce  
They goon and; pleyn hem al the longe day  
And; thys was in the sixte morow of may  
Whiche may hath pepntid with her soft scholbris  
Thys gardyn ful of leys and; of flours  
And; craft of mannyis hond; so corroulsly  
Arayd; hath thys gardyn treibly  
That neuer was there gardyn of such pryse  
But yf it were the berry paradys  
The odour of flours and; the fresch syghte  
Wold; haue maad; ony herte lyghte  
That euer was born but yf to greet siknes  
Or to greet sorow held; it in dysces  
So ful it was of beaute wyth plesaunce  
Anon after dynner gonne they to daunce  
And; song; also saue derygene allone  
Whych; maad; allbey her compleynt & hir mone  
For she ne salb hym in the daunce go  
That was her husbond; and; her loue also  
But natheles she muste her tyme abyde  
And; wyth good; hope lette her sorowlys slyde  
Wy on thys daunce amonge other men  
Daunsid; a squyer before derygene

## The Frakeleyns tale

That freſſher was and jolyer of arraye  
As to my dome than is the month of Maye  
He ſpyngeſſe daunſpynge paſſynge ony other man  
That is or was ſyn the world began  
Therbyth he was yf men ſhold hym deſcryue  
One of the beſte farynge men on lyue  
Ponge ſtronger vertuous ryght and wyſe  
And wel beloved and holdyn in gret pryce  
And ſhortly yf I the ſoth telle ſhall  
Conſpytyng of thys doxygene at all  
Thys luſty ſouper ſervant to Venus  
Whych that clepyd was Aurelius  
Hath loved her beſt of ony creature  
Elbo peer or more as was his aventure  
But neuer durſte he telle her his grievance  
Wythout the cup drank he al his penaunce  
He was deſpeyred nothyng durſte he ſey  
Save in his ſongis ſomdele bold he wryte  
His woo as in a general compleynynge  
He ſayd he loved & was beloved nothyng  
Of ſuch matter made he meny layis  
Songis compleyntis rondels byrelayes  
Holt that he durſte not his ſorow telle  
But languyng as a fure doth in helle  
And dye he ſayd he muſte as dyd Ekko  
For narasus that durſte not telle his wo  
In other maner than ye here now ſay  
He durſte he not his wo to his beloved  
Save paraventure at feſtes and daunſis  
There ponge folk keepyn her obſervance  
It may wel ſen he bolyd in her face  
In ſuch a wyſe as men that ayeen graue  
But nothyng wyſe he of his entent  
Natheles it hapid or they thens went  
By cauſe that he was her neyghbour  
And was a man of worſhypp and honour  
And hadde knowen hym of tymes yore  
They fallen in ſpeche & ſo more and more

## The Frankeleyns Tale

In to hys purpos drelbe Aurelius  
And whan he salb hys tyme he sayd thus  
Madame quod he by god þ this world made  
So that I wiste I myght your herte glade  
I wolde that day that your Arueragus  
Went ouer the see that I Aurelius  
Had gone there I sholde neuer come ageyn  
For wel I boot my scrupse is in heyn  
My guerdon is but brestyng of myn herte  
Madame telbe on my peyns smerte  
For wyth a word ye may me sleen or saue  
Here at your feet godd wolde I were begraue  
I ne haue as nolbe nomore leysur to sepe  
Haue mercy swete and do me not to depe  
She gan to loke vp on thys Aurelius  
So this your wyl quod she and say ye thus  
Neuer erst quod she ne wiste I what ye ment  
But nolb Aurelye I knolbe your entent  
By that godd that pas me soule and lpf  
He shal I neuer be vntrelbe wylf  
In word ne in werk as fer as I haue wylt  
I wyl be hys to whome that I am knyt  
Take thys for fynal answere as of me  
But aftyr than in pley thus sayd she  
Aurely sayd she by hygh godd a loue  
Yet wol I graunte you to be your loue  
Syn I se you so pytously compleyne  
Loke what day that endonge brytayne  
Ye remeue al the rockis stoon by stoon  
That they ne lette shyp ne boot to goon  
I say whan ye haue maad the coste so clene  
Of rockis that there is no stoon I seen  
Than wol I loue you best of ony man  
Haue here my trouthe in al that euer I can  
Is there none other grace in you quod she  
No by that lord quod she that makedy me  
For wel I boot that it shal neuer letyde  
Let such folwe out of your herte a slyde

## The Frakeleynes tale

What deynce shold a man haue in hys lyf  
For to go loue anothyr mannes wyf  
That hath her body when so that hym likyth  
Aurelius ful oft & sore spekth  
Wo was Aurely when that he thys herd  
And wyth a sorowful herte he thus answerd  
Madame quod he thys were impossibyl  
Than muste I dye in soden deth horribyl  
And wyth that word he turned hym anon  
Tho com her other frendes many on  
And in the aleys comedyn vp and down  
And nothyng wystryng of thys conclusioun  
And so dely begonnen cruel nelbe  
Tyl the bryght sonne wote hys helbe  
For the dysfunte hande rest the sonne her sight  
Thys is as muche to say as it was nyght  
And hom they goon in ioye and solas  
Saue only wretchyd Aurelius alas  
He to hys hous is goon wyth sorowful hert  
He sayth that he ne may from hys deth astert  
Hym semeth that he felth hys herte cold  
Wnto heuen hys hondis he gan hold  
And on hys knees hure he set hym down  
And in Faupng sayd thys orison  
For Berry woo out of hys wyf he brayde  
He nyte what he spak but thus he sayde  
Wyth pteuous herte hys pleynt hath begonne  
Wnto the goddis and first vnto the sonne  
He sayd Apollo god and gouernour  
Of euery plante herte tre and flour  
That creypt astyr thy declynacion  
To eke of hem hys tyme and hys seson  
And thyn heretow churungth wolbe and hys  
Lord ptebus cast thy mercyable eye  
On wretchyd Aurely whyle am but born  
Lo lord my lady hath my deth sworn  
Wythouten gylt but thy kengnyngte  
Op on my dedly herte haue some pte

## The Frankelynes Tale

But wel I boote lord ptebus yf ye lyst  
Ye may me helpe saue my lady lest  
Nolb voucheauf that I may you deuyse  
Holt that I may be holpen and in what wyse  
Your blissful sustir lucyna the skene  
That of the see chref goddesse is and quene  
Though Neptunus haue depte in the see  
Yet Emperesse aboue hym is she  
Ye know wel lord ryght as she desyre  
As to be quychened & lyghtnyd of your fyre  
For whych she folowyth yow ful besply  
Ryght so the see desirith naturelly  
To folow her and she that is goddes  
Bothe in the see and ryuers more and les  
Wherefore lord ptebus thys is my request  
Do thys myrakyl or do myn herte brest  
That nolb next at thys opposicioun  
Wyth ynn whych signe shal be the lyoun  
As prayeth she so greet a flood to brynge  
That fyue fadom at the lest it ouer sprynge  
The hyest rok in Armoryke brytayne  
And leet thys flood endure yenis tibeys  
Than certis to my lady may I sey  
Holdyth your lest the rockis be alwey  
Lord ptebus thys myracle do for me  
Praye her that she go no faster cours than ye  
I say thus praye your sustyr that she go  
No fastyr cours than ye in yenis tibo  
Than shal she be at euen ful alway  
And sprynge flood laste bothe nyght and day  
And but ye voucheauf in such manere  
To graunte me my souerayn lady dere  
Pray her to synke euery rok adoun  
In to helle her olben derk mansioun  
Under the grounde there Pluto dwellyth yn  
Or neuer mo shal I my lady wyn  
Thy tempyl in delphos wol I surfote seke  
Lord ptebus see the tarys on my cheke

## The Frakeleynes tale

And of my payne haue some compassion  
And with that word in swonne he fyll a doun  
And longe tyme he lay forth in a traunce  
Hys brother whych knele hys penaunce  
Wp caught hym & to bedde hath hym brought  
Dyspeyryd in this turment & in this thought  
Lete I thys woful creature lye  
Else he wether he wol lyue or dye  
A treragus byth hele and honour  
As he that was of chualre the flour  
Is comyn home and othyr worthy men  
A blissful art thou now thou dorygen  
That hast thy blissful husbond in thy armys  
The fressh knyght the worthy man of armys  
That buyth the as hys olben lertis lye  
No thyng ne lyste he to be ymagynatyf  
If ony wyght had spoke whys he was oute  
To ser of loue there of hadde he no doute  
He not entendyth to no such matere  
But daunsyth iustith and makyth good chere  
And thus in ioye & blis I lete hem dwelle  
And of the sik Aurelius wol I telle  
In langour and in turment furious  
Elbo yeer and more lay thys Aurelius  
Or ony foot he myght on erthe goon  
No comfort in thys tyme hadde he noon  
Saue of hys brother whych was a clerk  
He knele al thys woo and al thys werk  
For to noon other creature wryteyn  
Of thys matere he durst no word seyn  
Under hys brest he hure it more secrete  
Than euer dyd Phamphilus for Galatthe  
Hys brest was hool wythoute forto sen  
But in hys hert ay was the awol keen  
As weel ye knowe of a fursanure  
In surgerie ful perous is the cure  
But men myght touch þ awol or com therby  
Hys brother lereyth and waylyth pynely

## The Frankeleyns Tale

That atte laste hym fyl in remembraunce  
That whilis he was at Orlaunce in Fraunce  
As ponge clerkis that been lyfhorous  
To redyn artis that been curpous  
Sekyn in euery halke andy euery herne  
Particular sciences for to lerne  
He hym remembryd that vp on a day  
In orlaunce in hys stude a boke he sawe  
Of magyk naturel whych he hys felalbe  
That was that tyme a bucheler of salbe  
Had pryuelly vp on hys deske last  
Al were he there to lerne another craft  
Whych booke spak moche of operacions  
Touchyng the eyght andy tibeny mancions  
That lungen to the mone andy such folp  
As in our dayes is not worth a flye  
For holy chyrche sayth in our beleue  
He sufferyth not iulusion be to greue  
Andy when thys booke was in remembraunce  
Anon for joye hys herte gan to daunce  
Andy to hym self he sayd pryuelly  
My brothyrt watiffed shal be hastely  
For I am siker that ther be sciences  
By whych men make dyuers apperences  
Such as thys subtil tregetouris pley  
For ofte at festis haue I wel herd seye  
That tregetouris bythynne an halke large  
Haue made come in a watyr andy a barge  
Andy in the halke wiben vp andy down  
Some tyme hath semed come a greet houn  
Andy somtyme flouris sprynge as in a mede  
Some tyme a vyne andy grapys whyte & rede  
Some tyme a castel of lyme andy stene  
Andy when he skynth it boydyth anone  
Thus semyth it to many a manns sight  
Nolb than conclude I thus yf I myght  
At Orlaunce some oldy felow fynde  
That hadde the monys mansions in mynde

## The Frakeleynes tale

Or othyr magyk naturel aboue  
He sholdy wel make my brother haue hys boue  
For wyth an apparence a clerk may make  
To mannyes sight that al the rockis blake  
Of brytayne were boydyd euerichoon  
Andy shypis by the brynkis comyn andy goon  
Andy in such fourme endure a woke or tibe  
Than were my brother watyschyd of hys wo  
Than muste he nedis holdy her beleste  
Or ellis he shal shame her at the este  
What sholdy I make a lenger tale of thys  
Unto hys brotheris bedy y come he is  
Andy such comfort he gaf hym forto goon  
To Orhaunce that he vp stert anoon  
Andy on hys wey than onbardy is he faw  
In hope for to be lissyd of hys care  
Wheh they were come almost to that cyte  
But yf it were a tibo forlongy or thre  
A yong clerk comyng by hym self they mette  
Whych that in latyn thyrself hym grette  
Andy astyr that he saydy a wonder thyng  
I knolbe quody he the cause of your comyng  
Andy er they further ony foot wente  
He toldy hem al what was her entent  
Thys brytoun clerk hym aydy of felalbis  
The whych he hady knolben in oldy dayes  
Andy he answeredy hym that they dedy were  
For whych he wepte ful meny a tere  
Doun of hys hors Aurelius right anon  
Andy with this magicien forth he gan goon  
Hoom to hys hous andy made hym wel at ese  
Hym lackidy no bytynl that hem myght plesse  
So wel amyd hous as there was oon  
Aurelius in hys lyf salb neuer noon  
He sheldy hym or he wente to sowere  
Forestis parkis ful of wyldy dere  
There salb he lertis wyth her hornys hys  
The gattyest that were euer sepe wyth eye

## The Fraunceys tale

He salu of hem an hundrid sleyn withoundis  
And some of arolbes blede & bytter woundis  
He salu whan boydded were thys wyld deer  
The falconers by on a fayr puer  
That with her halbes han the herons sleyn  
Tho by the knyghtis iustynge in a pleyne  
And after thys he dyd hym such plesaunce  
That he hym felowde his lady in a daunce  
In wyche hym self daused as hym thought  
And wher this maister y this magik brought  
Salu it was tyme he clapped his hondis to  
And farewell al our wel was al y do  
And yet remeued they neuer out of the hous  
Whyle they salu all thys sight meruayllous  
But in hys stody there hys lokis be  
They fittyn stille & no light but they thre  
To hym thys mayster callid hys squyer  
And sayd hym thus is redy our soper  
Almost an hour it is y undertake  
Syn y you had our soper for to make  
Whan that thys worthy men wente with me  
In to my study there my lokis be  
Spre quod the squyer whan it likyth yow  
It is all redy though ye wyl ryght now  
So be thenne sope quod he it is for the laste  
Thise amorous folk some tyme must haue reste  
And after soper fyl they in tete  
What sume shold the maysteris guerdon be  
To remeue alle the rockis in Brytayne  
And eek from geronde to the mouth of sayne  
He made hym straunge he swor so god hym saue  
Lesse than a thousand woud he wold not haue  
He gladly for that sume he wolde not goon  
Aurelius with blissful herte anon  
Sayth thus by on a thousand pound  
The wyde world whiche men saye is wounde  
I wold it geue yf I were lord of it  
This bargayn is ful dryue and ful luyt

## The Frankeleneys tale

Ye shul be payd? treibly by my trouthe  
But lokith noli for noon negligēce ne slouthē  
Ye tarpe be here no lenger than to morow  
May quod? þe clerk haue here my sayth to sorow  
To bedde he goth Aurelius whan hym lesse  
And? wel nygh al that nyght he hadde reste  
What for hys labour and? for hys hope of blisse  
Hys woful herte of penaunce hadde a lisse  
Op on the morow whan it was day  
To brytayne took they the ryghthe way  
Aurelius and? thys magicien hym beside  
And? he descended? there they wol abyde  
And? thys was as the book doth remembre  
The cold? frosty seson of decembre  
Plutus beydyd old? and? helved? lyke latoun  
That a fore in hys foot declynacioun  
Shone as þe burnyd gold with strempes bryghht  
But noli in Capricorne a down he sight  
Where as he shone ful paal I dar wel sayn  
The byttr frostis wyth the slyt and? fayn  
Destroyd? hath the grene in euery perdy  
Janus sit by the fyre wyth dollbyl berdy  
And? drynketh of hys bugyl horn the wyne  
Wyforn hym stant braun of þe tuskedy swyne  
And? nolwel cypeth euery lusty man  
Aurelius in all that euer he can  
Doth to hys mayster chere and? reuerence  
And? prayeth hym to doon hys diligence  
To brynge hym out of hys peynes smert  
Or wyth a slyberdy that he wold? slyt hys hert  
Thys subtil clerk / such wouthē had of this man  
That nyght & day he spedde hym that he can  
To wayte a tyme of hys conclusioun  
Thys is to say to make illuscioun  
By such an apparent jogelrē  
I can no termys of aesculoge  
That she and? euery wyght shold? bene & say  
That of Brytayne the rockis were alway

## The Frakeleynes tale

Or ellis they were sunkyn vnder the grounde  
So at the laste he hath hys tyme y founde  
To make hys jape and hys wretchydnes  
Of such a superstitious cursidnes  
Hys tablis tolentanes forth he brought  
Ful wel correctid it lackid nought  
Neither hys coler ne hys expanse yenis  
Ne hys rotis ne hys othyr geris  
As ten hys contris and hys argumentis  
And hys proporcynel conuenientis  
For hys equacions in euery thyng  
And by hys cyght spere in hys workyng  
He knew ful wel how for alnath was shoue  
Fro the bed of that fyre aries a boue  
That in the nynthe spere considerid is  
Ful subtilly he had calked alle thys  
Whan he hadde founden hys first mansioun  
He knewe the remenaunt by proporaoun  
And knewe the rysyng of hys mone well  
And in whys face and terme and euerydell  
And knewe wel the monys mansioun  
Attendant vnto hys operacioun  
And knew also wel hys other obseruauncis  
For such illusions and such myschauncis  
As lathen folk vleden in tho dayes  
For whyle no lenger makith he delays  
But thorow hys magyk for a woke or tibepe  
It semyd that all the rockis were albepe  
Aurelius yet whyle that dyspeyrid is  
Wher he shal haue hys loue or fare amys  
And wapyth nyght & day on thys myrakyl  
And when he knewe ther was none obstakyl  
That boydyd were the rockis echon  
Down to hys maystais feet he fyl anon  
And sayd I woful wretchyd Aurelius  
Thanke you lord and my lady Venus  
That me haue holpe fro my earis colde  
And to the tempyl hys wey hath he holde

## The Frankelynes tale

Where as he knelbe he shold his lady see  
And when he salbe his tyme anone right he  
Wyth dredful herte and wyth humbly chere  
Salubryd bath his souereyn lady dere  
My right lady quod this woful man  
Whom I most drede and loue as I best can  
And lothest were in al this world dysplese  
Nere it that for you I haue such dysse  
That I moot dye here at your foot anon  
Nought wolde I telle you me is wo begoon  
But certis or I muste dye or pleyne  
Ye sle me gylles for very pyne  
But of my deth thowgh ye haue no routhe  
A dysfeth nold or that ye bryke your trouthe  
And repente you for that god aboue  
Or ye me sle by cause that I you loue  
For madame ye boot what ye haue hyght  
Not that I chalange any thyng of ryght  
Of you my souereyn lady but of your grace  
But in the gardyn ponder in such a place  
Ye wyth a right wel what ye fekyng me  
And in myn hond ther your trouthe plight ye  
To loue me best god boot ye sayde so  
Al be it that vnworthy I be ther to  
Madame I speke it for the honour of you  
More than for to saue my lertis lyp right nold  
I haue do so as ye comaunded me  
And yf ye voucksauf ye molde goo see  
Doth as your list haue your list in mynde  
For quyk or ded right there shul ye me fynde  
In you lyth alle to do me lyue or dye  
But wel I boot the rockis been alweye  
He takith his leue and sturstoned stood  
In al her face nas ther o drop of blood  
She wende neuer to come in such a trapp  
Alas quod she that euer this shold happe  
For wende I neuer by possibylite  
That such a monstere or meruayl myght be

## The Frankeleyns tale

It is ageyns the procces of nature  
And hom she goth a sorowful creature  
For berry feet vnnethe myght she go  
She weppeth and waylith a day or tibo  
And swolmynth that it wolthe was to see  
But why it was vnto noman told she  
For out of tolbne was goon Aueragus  
But to her self she spak and sayd thus  
Wyth face pial and sorowful chere  
In her compleynt as ye shul after here  
Alas quod she on the fortune I pleyne  
That vnlbaar wrappid hast me in thy cheyne  
fro whyche to scape knowe I no socour  
Sawe only deth or to grete dyshonour  
One of thise who behouyth me to chese  
But natheles yet haue I leyre lese  
My lyf than of my body haue a shame  
Or knowe my self fals or lese my name  
And wyth my deth I may be quyt pbyes  
Hath ther nat many an nobyl wyf or thys  
And meny a mayde sleyn her self alas  
Rathyr than wyth her body done a trespaas  
Per artres thise stowres kerpeth wytnes  
When therty tyrauntis ful of cursidnes  
Hadde sleyn Hydon in Athenes at a feste  
They comaundid hye doughteris forto arreste  
And brynge byforn hem in despit  
All nakyd to ful fylle her foul delyt  
And in her fadres blood they made hem daunce  
Op on the pavement god gyue hem myschaunce  
For whyche the woful maydens ful of drede  
Rathyr than they wold lese her maydenhede  
They keen pryncely stert in to a well  
And dreynt hem self as the lokis telle  
They of Mecene leten enquire and seke  
Of Lacedomp ffty maydens eke  
On whyche they wolden a done her lecherie  
But was ther none of al that compaigne

## The Frankeleyns tale

That she nas sleyn and byth a glady entent  
Ther rather for to dye than for to assent  
To be oppressid of her maydenshede  
Why shold I thanne to dye be in drede  
Lo eke the tiraunt Aristochides  
That buyd a mayde hyghte Stymphalides  
When her fader sleyn was on a nyght  
Wnto dyanes temple goth she right  
And sent the ymage in her hondis elbo  
From whiche ymage wold she neuer go  
No byght the hondis of her myght abra  
Tyl she was sleyn right in the place  
Nolb sith that maydens hadde such despyt  
To been defolwid byth manys delyt  
Wel ough the wyf rather her self to sle  
Than be defolwid as it thynketh me  
What shal I say of Dasoribuldis wyf  
That at Cartage berest her self her byf  
When that she saw the Romayns wan the town  
She took her chyldryn alle & shipped a down  
In to the fyre and chas rather to dye  
Than ony Romayn dyd her byhove  
Hath not Euxene slayn her self allas  
At Rome for that she oppressid was  
Of Tarquyne for her thoughte it was a shame  
To lyue when she had lost her name  
Eke seven maydens of Mellespe also  
Hauē sleyn hem self for very drede and woo  
Rather than þ folk of galle shold hem oppresse  
No than a thousand storges as I gesse  
Coude I telle as touchyng this matere  
When Abiadate was sleyn hye wyf so dere  
Her self sleugh and leet her blood to glyde  
In Abiadates boundis depe and wyde  
And sayd my body atte lest I wey  
Ther shal no byght defoule yf I may  
What shal I of hem mo ensamples sayn  
Syth that so many haue hem self slayn

## The Frankelynes tale

Wel wathir than they wold; defouled; be  
I wol conclude that it is the best for me  
To sle my self than be defouled; thus  
I wol be trelbe vnto Aueragus  
Or ellis sle my self in some manere  
Ryght as dyde Democenes doughter dere  
By cause she ne wold; defouled; be  
O Cedasus it is ful grete pyte  
To rede how thy doughter deyde alas  
That shough her self in such a maner was  
As grete pyte it was or wel more  
The thelun mayden that for Nicanore  
Her self shough right for such maner woo  
And; another thelun mayden dyd; right so  
For one of macedone had; her ouyr pressid;  
She wyth; her deth; her maydenshede redressid;  
What shal I sayn of Mitratis wyf  
That for such a was kerast her self her lyf  
How trelbe eek was also alreleades  
That for hys loue to dien rather ches  
Than forto suffer hys body vnburiel; to be  
So whyche a wyf was Alaste also quod; she  
What sayth Omer of good; penelope  
Al grete knolbeth of her chastyte  
Parce of lacedomea is wrytyng thus  
That whan at troye was sleyn protheselaus  
No lenger wold; she lyue after hys day  
The same of nobyl porcya telle I may  
Wythoute Brutus coude she neuer lyue  
To whome she hadde her herte al geue  
The parfyte wyfode of Arthemecye  
Honourid; is thorow out al Barburge  
O tanta quene thy wyfly chastite  
To alle wyuys may a myrour be  
The same thyng; I saye of helpea  
Of Fodogone and; eke Valeria  
Thus pleyne; dorigene a day or twey  
Purposen; euer that she wold; dey

## The Frankelynes tale

But natheles þp on the thyrdde nyght  
Home comyth Aueragus the worthy knyght  
And ageth hre wyf that she wepyth so sore  
And she gan wepe euer longer the more  
Alas quod she that euer I was born  
Thus haue I said quod she thus haue I sworn  
And told hym alle the cas by and by  
How she had promysed ignorantly  
The squyer lyke as ye haue herd to fore  
Hyt neddyth not to reherce hyt ony more  
This husbond with glad chere in frendly wyse  
Answerd and sayd as I shal deuyse  
Is ther aught ellis Dorygene but this  
May nay she sayd god helpe me so as this  
This is to mykyl & it were goddis wyl  
P: wyf quod she lat slepyth that is seyl  
It may be wel yet perauenture to day  
Ye shal your trouthe holde by my fay  
For god so wysly haue mercy on me  
I hadde wel leuer sepyd forth to be  
For very loue wyche I to you haue  
But ye shold your trouthe kepe and saue  
Trouthe is the hyest thyng that man may kepe  
But with that word he brast anon to wepe  
And sayd I you forbede on payne of deeth  
That neuer wyche you lastyth lyf or brett  
To no wyght to telle of this mysauenture  
As I may best I wol my woo endure  
He make no contraunce of skynnes  
That folk of you may deme harm or ges  
And forth he clepyth a squyer and a mayde  
Go forth anone wyth dorygene he sayde  
And bryng her to such a place anon  
They toke her leue and on her way they gon  
But they ne wysed wyf she thider wente  
He wolde no wyght telle his entente  
Perauenture an kepe of you pbyes  
Wyl holden hym a selld man in this

## The Frankelynes Tale

That he wyl put his wyl in jeopardy  
Herkeneth the tale or ye on hym are  
She may haue better fortune than you someth  
And whan that ye han herd the tale/demeth  
Thys squere wyche that hyght Aurelius  
On dorigene that was so amorous  
Of auenture happid here to mete  
Ampd the toun ryght in the quykkest strete  
As she wold haue gon the wey forth right  
Toward the gardyn there as she had hyght  
And he was to the gardyn ward also  
For wel he spyed whan she wold go  
Out of her hous to ony maner place  
But thus they metyn by auenture and grace  
And he salueth her wyth glady entent  
And ayid of her wythpylward she went  
And she answerd half as she were mad  
Unto the gardyn as my husband had  
My trouthe forto holde alas alas  
Aurelius gan to wonder in thys cas  
And in his herte hadde grette compassion  
Of here chere and of her lamentacion  
And of Aueraagus the worthy knyght  
That had her hold that she had hyght  
So both hym was yf she shold breke her trouthe  
And in his herte he caught of this gret wolthe  
Considerynge the beste or euery spde  
That from that lust yet were hym leuer abyde  
Than to do so hygh a folish wretchydnes  
Ageyns fraunchyse and gentylnes  
For wyche in felbe wordis sayde he thus  
Madame say to your lord Aueraagus  
That sith I se his grette gentylnes  
To you and eke I se your grette dyseres  
That hym were leuer haue shame & yf were routhe  
Than ye to me this shold breke your trouthe  
I haue wel leyr eyr to suffer woo  
Than I departe the loue betwix you two

## The Fraunceys tale

I pou relee madame in to your hond  
Oupt euery surment and euery bond  
That ye haue made to me as hre befor  
Synthyn that tyme that ye were first born  
My trouthe y plight I shal pou neuer repleue  
Of noon bestee and hre I take my leue  
As of the trelbest and eke the best wyf  
That euer yet I knelbe in al my lyf  
But euery wyf belvaar of her bestee  
On dorygene remembryth att leste  
Thus can a squyer do a gentyl dede  
As wel as can a knyght wythouten drede  
She thankyth hym vp on her knees al bare  
And hom to her husband is she fare  
And told hym al as ye haue herd me sayd  
And he ye sikir he was wel a payd  
That it were impossyble me to lye  
What shold I lenger of thys caas endyte  
Ameragus and dorygene hys wyf  
In souerayn baffe ledyn forth her lyf  
Neuer aftyr was there anger hem betwene  
He charydd her as though she were a quene  
And she was trewe to hym for euermore  
Of thys twio folk ye gett of me nomore  
Aurelius that hys cost hath al forborne  
Cursith the tyme that euer he was born  
Allas alas quod he that I bespyght  
Of purid gold a thousand pounde lyeight  
Wnto thys Philosopher holt shal I do  
I se nomore but that I am fordo  
Myn strytage I muste nedis selle  
And he a beggar hre I may not dwelle  
And shampyn alle myn knyghte in thys place  
But I of hym may gett some grace  
But natheles I wol of hym assaye  
At wrytyn peris and dayes to paye  
And thanke hym of hys grette curtesye  
My trouthe wol I kepe I lyf not lye

## The Frankelynes Tale

With ferte fore he goth vnto hys cofre  
And brought gold vnto thys philosophyr  
The baleib of fyue hundred pounde I ges  
And hym bescepyth of hys gentylnes  
To graunte hym dayes of the remenaunt  
And sayd maystyr I dar wel make auaint  
I sayd neuer of my trouthe as yet  
For sikirly my dette shal wel be quyt  
Toward you shal euer that I fare  
To go a beggynge in my kirtle bare  
But yf ye wold vouchsaf on surete  
Two yer or thre for to respyte me  
Than were I wel for ellis mot I selle  
Myn herptage ther is nomore to telle  
Thys philosophre sobyrly answerd  
And sayd thus whan he hys wordis herd  
Haue I not hold couenaunt vnto the  
Ys certis wel and treibly quod he  
Hast thou not had thy lady as the knyght  
No no quod he and sorowfully he sayth  
What was the cause tel me yf thou can  
Aurelius anone hys tale began  
And told hym al as ye haue herd before  
It nedyth not to reherce it you nomore  
He sayd Aueraagus of gentylnes  
Hadde leuer to dye in sorow and in dystres  
Than that hys wyf were of fere trouthe fals  
The sorow of doypgene he told hym als  
Holt both he were to be a byekid wyf  
And that she had leuer haue lost hyr lyf  
And he trouthe she swoor thorowly innocen  
She neuer erst had herd speke of apparence  
That made me to haue in her so gret pyte  
And right as fely as he sent her to me  
As fely sent I her home to hym ageyn  
Thys is al and some there is nomore to seyn  
Thys philosophyr ansiberd leue brother  
Euerich of you did gentylnes to othyr

## The Fraunceleynes tale

Thou art a squyer and he is a knyght  
But god forbode for his blisful myght  
But a clerk coude do as gentyl a dede  
As wel as ony of you it is no drede  
Syr I relea the thy thousand pound  
As nold thou lere cropen out of the ground  
He neuer or nold ne haddist knolwen me  
For sire I wol not take a peny of the  
For al my craft ne for al my trauaylle  
Thou hast wel payd for my bytayne  
It is ynold farwel and haue good day  
And took his hors & forth he goth his way  
Fordynge this question than age I yold  
Wher was the most fre as thynketh yold  
Nold tellyth me er that ye further wende  
I can n more my tale is at an ende

Here endyth the fraunceleynes tale  
And foloweth the prologe of the wif of Bathe



## The Wyf of Bathes Prologe

**E**xperient though none auctorite  
Were in thys world is right ynolw for me  
To speke of woo that is in mariage  
But lordis syn I tibelue pere was of age  
Thankyd be god that is eternal almye  
Husfondis at the chyrche dore haue I had fyue  
If I so often myghte haue weddid be  
And alle were worthye men in her degre  
But me was told not longe a go ylyps  
That sith cryst wente neuer but onys  
To weddyng in the Cane of galilee  
That by the same ensaumpeyl taughte he me  
That I ne weddid shold be but onys  
So he wyse a sharpe word for the nonys  
Beside a welke Ihesus god and man  
Spak in reproof of the samaritan  
Thow hast had fyue husfondis sayd he  
And that ilke man that nold say the  
Is not thy husfond thus he sayd certeyn  
What he mente thereby I can not sayn  
But that I aske why that the fyfth man  
Was not husfond to the samaritan  
How many myght he haue in mariage  
Yet herd I neuer tellen in myn age  
Of thys noumbre very dyspynacioun  
Men molbe deme and glose vp a down  
But wel I boote expresse wythoutyn lye  
That god had vs weye and multiplye  
That gentyl text can I wel vnderstonde  
Eke wel I boote he sayde that myn husfonde  
Shold leue fader and moder and take to me  
But of noumbre no menaion made he  
Of bygamyte or of Oatogamyte  
Why shold men speke of it belonpe  
So her the wyse kynge dan Salamon  
I trow he hadde wyues mo than on  
As wold to god it leefful were to me  
To haue refresshyng half so ofte as he

## The Wyf of Bath: Prologe

Whiche a yeste of god had he for al his Synys  
Noman hath such a y in this world on lyue is  
Gods boote this nobyl kyng as to my wyte  
The first nyght had meny a mery fyte  
Wyth eke of him so wel was hym on lyue  
Ye blessed be god for I haue had fyue  
Of whiche I haue prayd out the beste  
Bothe of her nethyr pure and eke her chaste  
Dyuers scolis makyth parfyght clerkis  
And dyuers practis in many sondry werkys  
Makyth the werkman parfyt sikerly  
Of fyue husbondis scolyng am I  
Wel come the sixt wken that euer he shal  
Forsoth I wyl not kepe me chaste in al  
Wken my husbond is fro the world y gon  
Some crysten man shal wedden me anon  
For the apostel sayth that I am fre  
To wedde a goddis half where it likyth me  
He sayth to be weddyd it is no synne  
Bettre it is to be weddyd than to brenne  
What rekyth me though men say bysnyse  
Of shrewde Lameth and of hys bygamyse  
I boote abraham was a ful holy man  
And eke Jacob as fer as euer I lere can  
And eke of them hadde mo wyues than two  
And meny another holy man also  
Where can ye say in ony maner age  
That euer god defendyd mariage  
By expresse wordys I pray you tel me  
Or where comandyd he euer bygamyte  
I boote as wel as ye it is no drede  
The apostel wken he spak of mayden hede  
He sayd that ther of precept had he noon  
Men may counseyl a womman to be oon  
But counseyl is no maner commandment  
He puttyth that in our olde jugement  
If he hadde god comanded maydenhede  
Than had he dampned weddyng oute of drede

## The Wyf of Bathes Prologe

And certis yf there were no seede y solbe  
Virgynyte what shold theow grolbe  
paulle durste not comaunde att leste  
A thyng whiche his mayster yaf none heste  
The darte is set vp on Virgynyte  
Catch who so may who wynneth best let see  
But thys word is not take of euery wyght  
But there as god wol geue it of hys myght  
I boote wel the apostel was a mayde  
But natheles though he broot and sayd  
He wolde euery wyght were such as he  
Al is but counsel to Virgynyte  
And forto be a wyf he yaf me leue  
Of indulgence so it be not to reueue  
To wedde me yf that my make dye  
Wythoute excecpcioun of bygamyte  
Al were it good no womman forto tolbe  
He mente in hys bed or in hys colbe  
For paryl it is fyre and tolb to assenbyl  
Ye knowe what thys ensample may resemble  
Thys is al and some he held Virgynyte  
More parfyte than weddyng in frelte  
Frelte clepe I but yf that he or she  
Wolde ledyn al her lyf in chastyte  
I graunte it wel I haue none enye  
Though maydenhede preferre bygamyte  
It likyth hem to be cleen in body and goost  
Of myn estate I wol make no boost  
Ful wel I knowe a lord in his houshold  
Hath not euery vessel of siluer and of gold  
Some been of tre and doon her lord serupe  
God clepyth to hym folk in sondry wyse  
And eke hath of god a proper yeste  
Som thys som that as hym lyst to shyfte  
Virgynyte is a greet perfection  
And contynence eke wyth deuocion  
But ayse that is of perfection the beste  
Wad not euery wyght he shold go selle

## The Wyf of Bathes Prologe

All that he hath and yeeue it to the poure  
And in such wyse folow hym and his fore  
He spak to hym that wyf lyue parfytly  
And lordyngis by your leue that am not I  
I wol bestowe the flour of al myn age  
In the actis & in fruyt of mariage  
Tel me also to what conclusion  
Were membris maad of generacion  
And of so parfyt wyse a wyght y brought  
Trust me wel they be not made for nought  
Else who so wol and sey vp and down  
That they were made for purgacion  
Of vyce and of other thyngis smale  
Was eke to knowe a female from a male  
And for no cause ellis say ye no  
The experyence boote wel it is not so  
So that ye clerkis wyth me be not wroth  
I say thus that they be made for both  
That is to say both for offyce and for ese  
Of engendrure there be god not dysplese  
Why shulde not ellis men in tokis sette  
That man shal yelde to his wyf her dette  
Where wyth shold he make his payement  
Yf he ne vndir his sely instrument  
Then were they maad vpon a creature  
To purge hym and eke to engendrure  
But I say not that euery wyght is hold  
That hath such harneis as I to you tolde  
To go and vse hem in engendrure  
Than shold men of chastyte take no cure  
Erste was a mayde and shapen as a man  
And many a saynt sith the world began  
Yet luyde they euere in parfyt chastyte  
But I nyl cnupe non virgynyte  
Eet hem wyth bred of pure whete be fed  
And let to be wyues hote harly bred  
And yet wyth harly bred as marc telle can  
Our lord Ihesus wrothwyde many a man

## The Wyf of Bathe prologe

In whyle astate as goddys thynge cleppest be  
I wyll perseuere I am not precious  
In wyfhood? wyll I vse myn instrument  
As frely as my maker hath it sent  
If I be daungerous goddys yeue me sorow  
Myn husbond shal it haue bothe eue & morow  
Whan that hym list come forth & pay his dette  
An husbond? wol I haue I wol not lette  
That shal be bothe my dettour and my thral  
And haue hys tribulacion wyth al  
Upon hys flessh whyle that I am hys wyf  
The polver I haue durynge al my lyf  
Both of hys propre body and nat he  
Ryght thus the apostel tolde it me  
And sad our husbondis for to loue be wel  
Al thys sentence me lyketh euerydel  
Op scert the pardonere and that anon  
Noble dame quod he by goddys & by saynt John  
Ye be an nobyl prechour in thys mas  
I was aboute to wedde a wyf alas  
What shold I bye it on my flessh so dre  
Yet hadde I leuer wedde no wyf thys yere  
A brude quod she my tale is not begonne  
May thou shalt drynke of another tonne  
Or that I go shal saueur worse than ale  
And when I haue told forth my tale  
Of tribulacion that is in mariage  
Of whyle I am expert in al myn age  
Thys is to sey my self haue be the whyppe  
Than mayst thou chese whither thou wilt sype  
Of that tonne that I the shal broche  
Be ware of it or thou to nygh approche  
For I shal telle ensamples mo than ten  
Who so wol not be waar by othyr men  
By hym shal othyr men corrected be  
Thys same wordis wyrtith ptholome  
Reedy in hys almegeste and take it there  
Dame I wyll praye you yf your wyll were

## The Wyf of Bathes prologe

Sayde thys pardonere as ye began  
Tel forth your tale spare for no man  
And tceke vs ponge men of your pratyke  
Gladly quod she sith it may you like  
But that I pray to al thys compaignie  
Yf that I speke after my fantasie  
As take not a greef of that I say  
For myn entent is but forto play  
Now seis than wol I telle you forth my tale  
As eury I muste drynke wyne or ale  
I shal say soth thys husbondis that I hadde  
Thre of hem were good and also were rade  
The thre men were good and rich and old  
Wherthe myght they the statute holde  
In whiche they were bounden vnto me  
Ye woot wel what I mene parde  
As help me god I laugh when that I thynke  
How petuysly a nyght I made hym to swynke  
And by my fapth I pas of hem no stoore  
They hadde my yeue her bond and her trewore  
Me nedyth not to do hem longer diligence  
To wyne her loue or do hem reuerence  
They loued me so wel by god above  
That I ne wold no deynce of her loue  
A wyse womman wyl lesy her eury in one  
To gete her loue ye there sit bath noon  
But sith I hadde hem holly in myn bond  
And after they had yeue me her bond  
What shold I take like ye hem forto please  
But yf it were for my profyt or for myn ease  
I shold hem so a werke by my fey  
That many a nyght they song wel a wey  
The lacon was not fet for hem I trolbe  
That some man hath in csey at donmolbe  
I gouerned hem so wel after my salbe  
That eke of hem ful blessful was and falbe  
To brynge me gay thyngis fro the feyre  
They were ful feyn when I spak to hem feyre

## The Wyf of Bath: prologe 1

For god it woost I chydde hem spychously  
Now herke how I haue me properly  
Ye wyse wyues that can vnderstonde  
Thus shold ye spekyng and lette hem an honde  
For half so holdy can there noman  
Silbere and lye as a womman can  
I say not thys by wyues that been wyse  
But yf be wixen they hem mys auyse  
A wyse wyf yf that she can lette good  
Shal lette hym on hond the colde is wood  
And take wytnesse of her olde mayde  
Of her assent but herkenyth how I sayde  
Spre olde Raynarde is thys thyng aray  
Why is myn neyghebour wyf so gay  
She is honourid where euer she goth  
I sitte at hom and haue no thyrsty chylde  
What dost thou at myn neyghebour hous  
Is she so fayr art thou so amorous  
What wildest thou wyth a mayde benedicte  
Spre olde lechour let thy iapis be  
And yf that I haue a gessur or a frende  
Wyth outyn gilt thou chyddest as a fende  
That I walk and playe into hye heus  
Thou comest hom as dronke as a moue  
And prechyst on thy fenche wyth euyl prech  
Thou sayst to me it is a greet myschance  
To wedde a poure womman for costage  
And yf she be ryche of hygh parage  
Thou sayst that it is a very turment  
To suffer her pryde and hyr melancoly  
And yf she be fayr thou very knaue  
Thou sayst that euery holour wol her haue  
She may no whyle in chastyte abyde  
That is assayd on euery syde  
Thou sayst some folk desire vs for riches  
Some for our shap & some for our faynes  
And some for she can othyr synge or daunce  
And some for gentylnes or for dalpauce

## The Wyf of Bathes prologe

Some for her hondis and her armys smale  
Thus goth al to the deupl by thy tale  
Thou sayst men may not kepe a castel wal  
It may so longe assayllid be ouyr al  
And yf she be foul thou sayst that she  
Coueytith euery man that she may se  
For as a spaynel she wol on hym lepe  
Tyl she may fynde some man her to chepe  
Ne none so grete goos goth ther in the lake  
As sayst thou wol be wythout her make  
And sayst it is an hard thyng for to wolde  
A thyng that noman wol hye thank holde  
Thus sayst thou breel wthan thou gost to bedde  
And that no wyse man nedyth for to wedde  
Ne noman that entendyth into heuyn  
Wyth wyld thundir dynt and fyre leuyn  
Moot thyn welked necke be to broke  
Tho sayst a droppynge hous and eek smoke  
And chydynge wyues maken men to flee  
Out of her housis atowys a benedict  
Whit eyllith such an old man for to chide  
Thou sayst we wyues wyll out byas hyde  
Tyl we be fast & than we wyll hem stowe  
Wel may that be a prouerbe of a shewe  
Thou sayst that oren assis hore and houndis  
They been assayd of dyuers stoundys  
Wasyns lauours or that men hem bye  
Sponys stolis and alle other husbondys  
And so be pottis clothys and aray  
But folk of wyues make none assay  
Tyl they be weddyd to old dotard shewe  
And than sayst thou wel our byas stowe  
Thou seyst also that it dyspleith me  
But yf thou wolte preys my beaute  
And but thou poure alday in my face  
And clepe me fayre dame in euery place  
And but thou make a feste that ylle day  
That I was born and me fresch and gay

## The Wyf of Bathe prologe

And but thou do to my noyze honour  
And to my chumfere wyth in my house  
And to my fadres folk and myn alpes  
Thus sayst thou old lurel ful of eyes  
And also for that our prentice Jankyn  
For hys cypis is shynnyng as gold fyn  
And for he squyreth me bothe vp and down  
Yet hast thou caught a fals suppetoun  
I wyl hym not though þi were ded to morow  
But tel me thys why hidist thou wyth sorow  
The keyes of thy cheste alweys fro me  
As wel it is my good as thyn parde  
What wenyest þi to make an yot of our dame  
Nolþ by that lord that clepyd is saynt Jame  
Thou shalt not bothe though þi were wood  
Be master of my body and of my good  
That one thou shalt forgo more thyn eyen  
What nedest thou of me to enquire or prye  
I trow thou woldyst like me in thy cheste  
Thou sholdist say good wyf go where ye lyst  
Take your dysport I wol leue no talis  
I knowe you for a trewe wyf dame alis  
We loue noman that takith kepe or charge  
Where that we go we wyl be at our large  
Of all maner men blessed mote he be  
The wyse Astrologer dan Protholome  
That sayth right thus in hys almegeste  
Of all men hys wysdom is the beste  
That rekkyth not who hath the world in honde  
By thys prouerbe thou shalt vnderstonde  
Haue thou ynough what dar the recke or care  
Holt merely that othyr folkis fare  
For certis olde dotardis by your leue  
Ye shal haue queynte ynough at cue  
For he is to gret an nygardy that wyl werne  
A man to light a candle at hys lantern  
He shal haue neuer the lasse light parde  
Haue thou ynough thou dar not pleyne the

## The Wyf of Bathes prologe

Thou sayst also yf that we make vs gay  
Wyth clothyng or wyth precious aray  
That it is peryl of our chastyte  
And wyth sorow thou must enforcen the  
And say thys wordis in the apostolis name  
In bapty made wyth chastyte and same  
Ye women shul appareille you quod he  
And nat in tressid her and ryche pette  
No perlis ne wyth gold ne cloths ryche  
A fyre thy tye ne after thy wyche  
I wol not worke as moche as a gnat  
Thou sayst thus I walk out as a cat  
But who so wol senge the cattis skyn  
Than wol the cat dwelle in hys py  
And yf the cattis skyn be styke and gay  
She wol not dwelle in hous half a day  
But forth she wol or ony day be dwelid  
To shewe her skyn and go a catfild  
Thys is to say yf I be gay sit shrew  
I wol renne out my horel forth shrew  
Syr olde fool what helppeth the to espyen  
Though y pleye argus wyth his hundrid eyen  
To be my ward corpe as he may lest  
In feyth he shal not kepe me but me lest  
Yet coude I make hys herde so mote I the  
Thou sayst eek that there be thyngys thre  
The wyche thyngis troublen al the erthe  
And that no wyght may endure the feithe  
O leue syr shrew Ihesus short thy lyf  
Yet prechyst thou and sayst an hateful wyf  
Rekenyng is for one of thys myschaunty  
Wen there nolv none othyr resemblaunty  
That may be lyke your parabylls vnto  
But yf a sely wyf be one of tho  
Thou liknest eke a womannes loue to selle  
To huryn bond there watyr may not dwelle  
Thou liknest vs eek also to wyld fyre  
The more it brennyth the more it hath a fyre

## The Wyf of Bathes prologe

To consume euery thyng that brent wolde be  
 Thou sayst ryght as wormys stendyn a tre  
 Ryght so a wyf destroyeth her husbonde  
 This knowen they that been to wyues bonde  
 Lordyngis right thus as ye haue vnderstonde  
 Ware I seyfly myn oldr husbondis on honde  
 That thus they sayden in there dronkenesse  
 And al was fals but as I took wytnesse  
 Of Jankyn and of myn nece also  
 O lord the pyne I dede hym and the woo  
 Ful gyttles by goddis swete pyne  
 For as an hors I coude byte and wyne  
 I coude pleyne though I were in the gyllt  
 Or ellis I hadde ofte tymes be spylt  
 Who so comyth first to the mylle first he grynt  
 I pleynded first so were our lornis synt  
 They were ful glady for to excuse hem blyue  
 Of thyng which they neuer agyltyd her lyue  
 Of wenchis wolde I kere hem ful sore on hond  
 When that for sike synnethe myght they stonde  
 Yet tildid I hys herte for that he  
 Wende that I of hym had so gret chere  
 I wooed that al my walkyng out by nyght  
 Was for to spee wenchis that he dyght  
 Andir that colour hadde I meny a myrthe  
 For al such thyng was gyeue us in our birthe  
 Dysceyt wepyng synnyng god hath yeue  
 To wommen kyndely whyle that they lyue  
 And thus of o thyng I may auaunte me  
 Atte ende I haue the better in eche degre  
 By slepyghte or force or by some maner thyng  
 Or by contynuel murmur or grutchyng  
 Namely a bedde hadde they myschaunce  
 There wolde I chyd and do hem no plesaunce  
 I wolde no longer there a bedde abyde  
 If that I felde hys arm ouer my side  
 Eyl he had maad hys raunson vnto me  
 Than wolde I suffer hym do hys nyete

## The Wyf of Bathes prologe

And therefore euery man thys tale I telle  
Wyn who so may for all is forto selle  
Wyth empty hondis men may no halibis lure  
For wyppynge wold I all his list endure  
And make me then a feyned appetyt  
And yet in facon hadde I neuer delyt  
That made me that euer I wold hem chyn  
For though the Pope hadde sitten hem beside  
I wold not spare hem at her olben borde  
For by my trouthe I quytte hem euery word  
As so help me god omnyotent  
Though right noll shold make my testament  
Solbe hem not o word that it mys quyt  
I brought it so aboute by my wyf  
That they muste yeue it vp al for the beste  
Or ellis hadde we neuer be in rest  
For though he lokid as wylde as a lion  
Yet shold he fayle of hys conclusioun  
Than wold I say good leef take kepe  
Holt mekely bekitt wyllyn our shep  
Come ner my spouse lat me bi thy chere  
Ye shold be al pacient and meke  
And haue a swete spiady conaunce  
Synth ye so speke of Jobbis patience  
Suffrith all day syn ye can so wel preche  
And but ye do certeyn we wol you teche  
It is farr a man to haue hys wyf in pees  
One of so tibo muste wolbe doutlees  
And sith a man is euer more resonable  
Than a woman is ye moste be sufferabyll  
What eyllith yoll to grutch and grone  
It is for ye wold haue my queynt alone  
Why take it so haue it euerydeel  
Petir I shreibe you but ye loue it weel  
For yf I wold selle my lele chose  
I coude walke as fressh as a rose  
But I wol kepe it for your olben toth  
Ye be to blame by god I say you soth

## The Wyf of Bathe Prologe

Suche maner wordis hadde I be on honde  
Now wol I speke of my fourthe husbonde

**W** Fourthe husbond was a reuelour  
Thys is to say he hadde aparamour  
And I was yong and ful of ragery  
Styborn & strong and pliant as a ype  
Holt coude I daunce vnto an harp smale  
And synge pbyes as ony nyghtyngale  
When I hadde dronk a draughte of swete wyne  
Metellius the foule chorle the swyne  
That wyth a staf beaste hys wyf her lyf  
For he drank wyne and I had he hys wyf  
He shold not haue dauntyd me fro drynke  
And after wyne on Venus muste I thynke  
For also sekir as cold engendryth hayl  
A licorous mouth muste haue a licorous tayl  
In womman synolent is no defence  
Thys knolven lechours by experience  
But lord cryst when it remembryth me  
When my yongthe and on my yolite  
It taklieth me aboute my herte rote  
Vnto thys day it doth my herte rote  
That I haue had my worlde as in my tyme  
But age alas that al wol enuynym  
Hath me beaste my beaute & my pyth  
Let go fare wel the deuyll go ther wyth  
The flour is go there nys nomore to telle  
The bren as I best may now muste I selle  
Now to be right mery wyf I fonde  
Now wyf I telle of my fourthe husbonde  
**S**ey he had in herte a gret despyte  
That I in ony other hadde delyte  
But he was quyt by god & by seynt jose  
I made hym of the same wode a croce  
Nat of my body in no foul manere  
But certeynly I made folk suche clere  
That in hys olben grece I made hym freye  
For angre and for verry jelousye

## The Wyf of Bathes Prologe

By god in erthe I was hys purgatorie  
For whiche I hope hys soule be in glorye  
For god it woot he sat ful ofte and songe  
When that hys shoulde ful byttirly hym wronge  
There was no light save god & he that wyse  
In many wyse hold sore I hym telyse  
He deyde when I come fro Jerusalem  
And litty p graue Under the roode beam  
All is hys tounke not so curius  
As was the sepulchre of hym darins  
Whiche that apelles broughte so subtyll  
It is but wast to hurpe hym preciously  
Let hym fare wel god geue his soule good rest  
He is now in hys graue & leyde in his chest

**A**ld of my fiftie husbond I wol I telle  
For let hys soule neuer come in helle  
And yet was he to me the moste shrewde  
That fele I on my ribbis alle by welde  
And euer shal vnto myn endyng day  
But in our bed he was ful fressh and gay  
And therewith all he coude so wel me glase  
When that he wolde haue my lele chose  
That though he hadde bette me on euery boon  
He coude wynn my loue agayn anon  
I trolde I loued hym best for that he  
Was of hys loue so daungerous vnto me  
We wimmen haue yf that I shal not lye  
In this mater a queynte fantasye  
Wayte what thyng we may not lightly haue  
There after whyl we are alday and craue  
Forke & be thyng and desirer we  
Preese on be faste and than whyl we fle  
With daunger bette we al our chaffare  
Gret pices at market makyth deere ware  
And to greet chep is holdyn at lytyl pryce  
This knoweth euery womman that is wyse

**I**n fiftie husked god hys soule blesse  
Whiche I took for loue & no richesse

## The Wyf of Bathes Prologe

He somtyme was a clerk of Oxenforde  
And hadde leste scole & wente at hoome to forde  
Wpth my gossyb the dwellynge in our town  
Gods haue her soule her name was alison  
She knelbe my kerte and eek my pryuyte  
Bettyr than our parish prest so mot I the  
To here helbrede I my counsel al  
For had myn husbond pyssid ageyns a wal  
Or do a thyng that he sholde haue cost hys lyf  
To her and also to another worthy wyf  
And to my nece wyhete that I loued wel  
I wold haue told hys counsel euerydell  
And so I dyd ful ofte god it woot  
That made hys face ful ofte reed and hoot  
For berry shame and blamed hym self þ he  
Hadde told to me so gret a pryuyte  
And so befyl that onys in a lentre  
So ofte tyme I to my gossyb wente  
For euer I loued to be gay allelway  
And forto walke in March Apryl & May  
Fro hous to hous to here sondry talis  
That Jankyn clerk and my gossyb dame alis  
And I my self in to the feldis wente  
My husbond was at london all that lentre  
I hadde the bettyr leysur forto pleye  
And forto see and eke forto be seye  
Of lusty folk what wyse I where my grace  
Was shapyn forto be or in what place  
Therefore I made my vytacons  
To vigylis and to processions  
To prechyng eke and to pylgremagis  
To pleyes of myracles and to mariagis  
And werid vp on my gay scarlet gytes  
Thise wormys ne thise molthis ne thise mytis  
Upon my parel frayde hem neuer a deel  
And wost thou why for they were vsed wel  
Nol wel I telle forth what happid me  
I say that in the feldis walkid we

## The Wyf of Bathes Prologe

Eyl treibly that we hadde such daliaunce  
Thys clerk and I that of my purueaunce  
I spak to hym and sayde how that he  
If I were wyddow shold wedde me  
For certeyn I say you for no bounce  
Yet was I neuer wythout purueaunce  
Of marpage ne of othyr thyngis ceek  
I hold a mons herte not worth a leek  
That hath but one hool for to sterre to  
And yf that fayle than is al y do  
I lare hym on hond he hadde enchaunted me  
My dame taughte me forsoth that sotylte  
And eke I sayd I mette of hym al nyght  
He wolde a slayn me as I lay vpright  
And al my bed was ful of very blood  
But yet I hope truly ye shul do me good  
For blood setokenyth gold as I was thought  
And al was fals I dremed of hym right nauht  
But as I folowedy ay my damys fore  
As wel of that as of othyr thyngis more  
And noll sere lette me se what shold I sayn  
A hi by god I haue my tale agayn  
Whan that my fourth husbond was on leere  
I wepte algate and made a sorow chere  
As wyues motyn for it is the vsage  
And wyth my kerche I clerid my vylage  
But for that I was purueyed of a make  
I wepte ful lytyl I dar vndertake  
To chyrche was my husbond born on morow  
Wyth our neyghbours y for hym made sorow  
And jankyn our clerk was one of tho  
As helpe me god whan that I salw hym go  
Aftyr the leere me thought he had a peyre  
Of leggis and feet so clene and so feyre  
That al my herte I gaf vnto hys hold  
He was I trow twenty wynter old  
But I was forty yf I shal say the soth  
But yet I hadde allwey a coltis with

## The Wyf of Bathe Prologe

Gaye tothyng I was but that became me weel  
I hadde the prync of saynt Venus seel  
As help me god I was a ful lusty on  
And feir & yfete & yonge and wel begoon  
And treibly as my husbondis told me  
I hadde the best queynte that myght be  
For certis I am alle fully Venetian  
In felynge and my herte is Marcan  
Venus me gaf my luste and lykerousnesse  
And mars gaf me my sturde hardynesse  
Myn ascendaunt was taure and mars ther yn  
Alas alas that euer loue was synne  
I folowed ay myn inclynacion  
By vertu of my constellacion  
That made me that I coude not wythdraue  
My chymbr of Venus fro a good felaw  
Yet haue I Martis mark by on my face  
And also in another prync place  
For god so wysly be my sauacion  
I luyde neuer by no dyscreccion  
But euer folowed myn appetit  
Al be it se longe short black or whyte  
I took no kepe so that he liked me  
Holt poure he was ne eke of what degre  
What shold I say but at the monthis ende  
Thys joly clerk Jankyn that was so kende  
Hath weddyd me wyth greet solempnyte  
And to hym gaf I all bond and fee  
That euer was yowme me ther before  
But afterward me repentyd it ful fore  
He nolde suffre no thyng of my lyste  
By god he smoot me onys on the cyste  
On the clyke for I rente out of his booke a leef  
That of the serock myn ere were al deef  
Styborne I was as is a lyonesse  
And of my tynge a very Jangelresse  
And walk I wold as I doon had before  
Fro houe to houe al though he had it sworn

## The Wyf of Bathes Prologe

For whyle he oft tyme wolde preche  
And me of old romaunce gestes tech  
Holt he sympliaus gallus leste his wyf  
And he forsook for terme of al his lyf  
Not but for ones oppynned he her say  
Lokynge out of his dore vp on a day  
Knothe romaunce he me by name  
But for his wyf was at a someris game  
Wythoute his wytyng he forsook her eek  
And he wolde he vp on his hyble seke  
That is the prouerbe of Ecclesiast  
Where he comaundyth and byddyth fast  
Men shal not suffre her bypys to coyle aboute  
Than wolde he say thus wythouten doute  
Who so byddyth his hous al of salubys  
And prynces his helynde hors ouer the faldris  
And suffreth his wyf to seke faldris  
So worthy to be songid on the faldris  
But all for nought I set not an halve  
Of all his prouerbis ne of al his old salve  
Ne I wolde not of hym correctid be  
I haue hem that tellen my vices vnto me  
And so do mo godi woot of us than I  
Thys maad hym woot wyth me al vitylly  
I wolde not fortere hym in no cas  
Noli wol I say you soth by saynt Thomas  
Why that I rente out of his book a leef  
For whyle he smot me so that I was deaf  
He hadde a book y gladly sothe myght & day  
For his dysport he wolde rede alway  
He clepyd it Valery and Trophrasie  
Atte whyle he book heough a lye ful faste  
And eke ther was a clerk som tyme in Rome  
A Cardynal that hyght seynt Jerome  
That made a book agayn Jonnyan  
In whyle he book ther was eek tortulan  
Crispyn Trotala and faldris  
That was Abbesse not for fro pane

## The Wyf of Bathes Prologe

Ande eke the parabolis of wyse Salamon  
Onydes art ande eek tokis many on  
Ande alle thysc were bounden in one Volume  
Ande every day & nyght was hys custome  
When he had leysur ande ony vacacion  
Fro all other wordly occupacion  
To redyn on thys booke of wyckid wyues  
He knelde of hem mo legendis ande luyes  
Than he of good wyues in the byble  
For trustyth wel it is an impossyble  
That ony clerk wold speke good of wyues  
But yf it be of holy sayntis luyes  
He of none othyr women neuer the mo  
Who preyntyd the loun tel me who  
By god yf women hadde wrytyn storys  
As clerkis haue wrytyn for Oratoris  
They wold haue writ of me more wickednesse  
Than all the marke of adam may redresse  
The chyldeyn of mercury ande Venus  
Been in for workyng ful contrarious  
Mercury souyth wysedom ande science  
Ande Venus souyth ryot ande dyspence  
Ande for for dyuers dysposicion  
Eche saylyth in othris exaltacion  
As thus god woot Mercury is dyssolate  
In pyces wher Venus is exaltate  
Ande Venus saylyth ther Mercury is reysid  
Therfor women of no clerk is preyid  
The clerk when he is old ande may nought do  
Of Venus workys not worth hys old shoo  
Than sittyth he down & wryttyth in hys dotage  
That women can not kepe for mariage  
But now to purpos why I tolde the  
That I was letyn for a booke parde  
Wy on a nyght Jankyn that was our sirc  
Kadde on hys booke as he sat by the fyre  
Of Eur first that for for wyckednes  
Was al mankynde brought to wretchednes

## The Wyf of Bathes Prologe

For which that Ihesu crist hym self was slayn  
That boughte us wyth hys hert blood agayn  
So here expres of women may ye fynde  
That womman was the los of al mankynde  
The redde he me hold Sampson loste hys hertis  
Slepyng his lemmyn kyt hym wyth her fytis  
Torough which treson lost he bothe hys eyen  
The radde he me yf that I shal not lye  
Of hercules and of hys Dyanyre  
That causyd hym to sette hym self a fyre  
No thyng forgot he the sorow and the woo  
That Socrates hadde wyth hys wyue  
Holt Exantipa cast yfse vp on hys hert  
Thys sely man sat styll as he were ded  
He wyppid hys hert nomore durste he sayn  
But or the thunder seynte ther comyth rayn  
Of pasipha that was the quene of Crete  
For shrewdnesse hym thought the tale swete  
If speke nomore it is a gysly thyng  
Of her horrible luse and of her lakyng  
Of Electymystra for her hygh lecherye  
That fastly made her husband to dye  
He redde it wyth ful good deuocion  
He tolde me eke for what conclusion  
Amphioraze at thekes lest hys lyf  
My husbande hadde a legende of hys wyf  
Euphylem that for an ouer of gold  
Was vryuely into the grekis told  
Where that her husbande byd hym in a place  
For which he had at thekes a sovy grace  
Of Lina told he me and of Lucy  
They bothe made her husbande forto dye  
That one for loue that other was for hate  
Lina her husbande vpon an cun late  
Enuoysond hym for that she was hys foo  
Lucia likewise loued her husbande soo  
For he shold algate on her thynke  
She gaf vnto hym such a loue drynke

## The Wyf of Bathes prologe

That he was dede or it was at morow.  
And thus algate husbondis had sorow  
Thanne told he me how that Latuncus  
Compleyned how that fel man arrius  
That in hys gardyn growed such a tre  
On which he sayd that hys wyys thre  
Hanged hem self for her hertis despytous  
O leue brother sayd than thys arrius  
Gyf me a plant of that blissyd tre  
And in myn gardyn plantyd shal it be  
Of latere date of wyys hath he red  
That some haue sleyn her husbondis a bed  
And let her lechour dyght hem all the nyght  
Whyles that the corpe lay in floor vpryght  
And some haue dryue nayles in her brayn  
Whyles þ they slepte & thus they haue he slayn  
Some haue yue hem poyson in her drynke  
He spak more harm than herte may thynke  
And ther wyth al he coude mo prouerbis  
Than in thys world growe gras or herbis  
Bettr is quod he thyn habytacion  
Be wyth a yowen or a foul dragon  
Than wyth a woman vspynge forth chyd  
Bettr is quod he hygh in hys wof abyde  
Than with an angry wyf down in the hous  
They be so wyckyd and so contraryous  
They haten that her husbondis leue ay  
He sayd a woman cast her sikene alway  
Whan she cast of her smok and ferther mo  
A fayr woman but she be chaste also  
Pe lyk a gold ringe on a solys nose  
Who wold leue or who wold suppose  
The wo that in myn herte was and pyne  
And whan I saw that he wold neuer fyne  
To redyn on hys cursyd look al nyght  
Al sodenly thre leys haue I plyght  
Out of hys look right as he redde and celi  
I wyth my fist so took hym on the chek

## The Wyf of Bathes Prologe

That in our fyre he fyl backward a doun  
And he vp stert as doth a wood spoun  
And wyth hys fist he smot me on the heed  
That in the flore I lay as I were ded  
And whan he salb holi style that I lay  
He was agast and wold haue fled alway  
Tyl atte laste I out of my sylbolne abreyd  
O hast thou slayn me fals theef I seyde  
And for my bond thus hast thou murdered me  
Or I be ded yet wol I onys kysse the  
And neer he cam & knelyd fayre a doun  
And sayde dere suster swete alpsoun  
As helpe me god I shal the neuyn smyte  
That I haue do it is thy self to wyte  
Forgeue it me and that I the lesse  
And yet eft sonys I hyte hym on the cheke  
And sayde theef thus muche I am felbreke  
Noli wol I dy I may no longer speke  
But atte laste wyth muche care and woo  
We fyl accordyd by our selfyn tibo  
He gaf me the byrdyl in my bond  
To haue the gouernaunce of hous & bond  
And aftyr of hys tinge & of hys bond also  
And made hym brene hys book anone tho  
And thanne whan I had gotyn vnto me  
The maysterpe and eek the souereynite  
And that he sayde myn olben trelbe wyf  
Doth as you lyst al the terme of thy lyf  
Repe thy honour and eke myn astat  
And after that day we hadde neuer debat  
God helpe me so I was to hym as kynde  
As ery wyf fro denmark in to ynde  
And also trelbe and so was he to me  
I pray to god that syttith in mageste  
So blysse hys soule for hys mercy dere  
Noli wol I say my tale yf ye wol here

## The Wyf of Bathes prologe

**T**he firste word whiche he had herd al this  
Nolde dame quod he so haue I ioye & bliss  
Thys is a longe preambyl of a tale  
And when the sompnour herd the firste gale  
Lo quod þe Sompnour for goddes armys tibe  
A firste wol entremete hym euermore  
Lo good men a flye and eke a firste  
Wol fal in euery manys dysse & matere  
What spekest thou of preambulacion  
What ambyl or trot go ysse or syt a doun  
Thou lettyst our dysport in thys matere  
Ye wolte thou so sir Sompnour quod the firste  
Nolde by my feyth I shal or that I go  
Telle of a Sompnour such a tale or tibe  
That al folk shal calyghe in thys place  
Nolde ellis firste I he shreibe thy face  
Quod thys sompnour and I keshreibe me  
But yf I telle talis tibe or thre  
Of frenis or that I come to Sydynghourne  
That I shal make the sore forto morne  
For wel I boote thy patience is goon  
Our hoste cryde pees and that anon  
And sayd let the womman telle her tale  
Ye faren as folk that dronke been of ale  
Do dame tel forth your tale and that is best  
Al redy syye quod she ryght as you lyst  
Yf I haue space of thys worthy firste  
Pees dame quod he telle forth and I wol here

Here endeth the Wyf of Bathes prologe

# The Wyf of Bathes tale

Here begynneth the wyf of Bathes tale

**I**n olde dayes of kynge Artur  
Of wyche brytane speke grete honour  
Al was this lond fulfild of fayre  
The elf quene wyth her joly compaigne  
Dauntyd ful ofte in meny a grene mede  
This was the olde oppynyon as I rede  
I speke of many an hundryd yeres a goo  
But nold can noman see none elphis mo  
For nold the grete charite and prayers  
Of lymptours and othyr holy frenis  
That serchen euery lond and euery strete  
As thycke as motis in the sonne beem  
Wyllyng hallis chambrys kechens and solbris  
Cytyes boroughs castelles and hygh towris  
Thorpis beris Shypens and deyrpes  
This makyth that ther be no feyres  
For there as wont was to walke an elf  
Ther walkyth nold the lymptour hym self  
In vndermethis and in moornyngis  
And sayth his matyns and his holy thyngis  
As he goth forth in his lymptacion  
Wommen may nold go sauely vp and down  
Vnder euery bush and vnder euery tre  
There is none other meibys but he  
And he ne wold do hem ony dysshonour  
And so befel that this kynge Artur  
Hadde in his hous a lusty lackeler  
That on a day come rydynge fro the ryuere  
And happyd that alkone as he was born  
He saw a mayde walkyng hym befor  
Of wyche mayde anone magre he red  
By berry force he byrefte her maydenshed  
For wyche oppressioun was such clamour  
And such pursute vnto kynge Artur  
That dampned was this knyght to be ded  
By cours of lawe and shold haue lost his hed

## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Parauenture suche was the statut tho  
But that the quene and othyr ladyes mo  
So longe prayden the kyng of grace  
Eyl he hys lyf grauntid in that place  
And gaf hym to the quene al at her wille  
To chese whetther she wold hym saue or spylle  
The quene thankid þe kyng wyth al her myght  
And aftyr thys thus spak she to the knyght  
Wxn she sal her tyme by on a day  
Thou stondyst yet quod she in suche aray  
That of thy lyf yet hast thou no surte  
I graunte thy lyf yf thou canst telle me  
Whit thyng it is that women most desiren  
Welbaar and keep thy necke from iren  
And yf thou canst not telle it anon  
I shat the yene yet leue forto goon  
A twelf month and a day to seke and leue  
An answer sufficient in thys matere  
And suerte wol I haue or that thou pace  
Thy body forto yel dyn in thys place  
Woo was this knyght and sorowful he sighith  
But he may not do al as hym likyth  
And att laste he chaas hym forto wende  
And come ageyn right at the yeres ende  
With suche answer as god wold hym purueye  
And takith his leue & wendith forth his weye  
He seketh euery hous and euery place  
Wher as he hoppyth forto fynde grace  
To wyte what thyng women loued most  
But he coude arriuen in no cost  
Ther as he myght fynde in thys matere  
Elbo creaturis accordyng in fere  
Some sayd women loued best richesse  
Some sayd honour some sayd Jolynesse  
Some sayd ryche aray some sayd lust a bed  
And ofte tymes to be wydolb and to be wed  
Some sayd that be he in her most esid  
Whan be he flaterid and y plesid

## The Wyf of Bathes tale

He goth ful nygh the soth I wol not lye  
A man shal best bynne be wyth flaterye  
And wyth attendaunce and wyth besynes  
Ben he y lymyd bothe more and les  
And some sayd that he loue best  
For to be fre and do right as he lyst  
And that noman reprene be of our wyf  
But seþ that he be wyse & nothyng nyf  
For truly ther is none of be alle  
If ony wyght wol clalbe be on the galle  
That he nel spke for that he sayth be soth  
Assay and he shal fynde it that it doth  
For he be neuer so vicious wyth ynne  
He wolde beholdeþ wyse & cleen out of synne  
And some sayd gret delyt haue he  
For to beholde stabyl and eke sece  
And in one purpos stedfastly to dwelle  
And not to felwrepe that men be telle  
But that tale is not worth a rakis stele  
Forde he wommen can nothyng felle  
Wytnes on Myda wol ye heere the tale  
Cuide amonge other thyngis smale  
Sayde Myda hadde vnder hye kinge lene  
Grollyng vpon hye hed ilbo assis ene  
The wyfely wyf he hyde as he best myght  
Ful subtylly from euery mannys sight  
That saue hye wyf ther wyte of it nomo  
He louyd her most and trustyd her also  
He prayde her that to no maner creature  
She wolde telle of hye foul dysfygure  
She swor hym þ for al the world to bynne  
She nolde do that belony ne synne  
To make her husbode to haue so foul a name  
She wolde not it for her olbyn shame  
But natheles she thoughte that she deyde  
That she so long shold a counsel hyde  
She thoughte it was so fore aboute her lere  
That nedis some word her moste a sterte

## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

And sith she durste telle it to noman  
Doun to the maypce faste by she ran  
Thyl she cam there her herte was in fyre  
And as a bytore blombyth in the myre  
She leyde her mouth vnto the watyr doun  
Welbrey me not thou water wyth thy soun  
Quod she to the I telle it and to nomoo  
Myn husbonde hath longe assis elbo  
Nolb is myn herte al hool nolb it is oute  
I myght no lenger kepe it out of doute  
Here molbe ye se though be a tyme abyde  
Yet out it muste be can no counsel hyde  
The remenant of the tale yf ye wyl here  
Redyth ouyde and there ye may it lere  
Thys knyght of whom my tale is specialy  
Whe that he salb he myght not come therby  
Thys is to say what wommen kuen most  
Wythm hys breste so sorouful was hys gost  
But hoom he goth he myght not sojourne  
The day was come þ hoomward most he tourne  
And in hys lye as happid hym to ryde  
In al hys care vnder a forest syde  
Where as he salb vpon a daunce go  
Of ladys four e tibeny and yet mo  
Tolward whych daunce he drolb ful yerne  
In hope that he shold some wysdom lerne  
But certynly or that he cam fully there  
Wanyssed was thys daunce he nyte where  
No creature salb he that liar lye  
Saue on the grene he salb sittynge a wyf  
A fouler wyght ther myght noman deuse  
Agayn thys knyght thys old wyf gan ryse  
And sayde syre knyght herforth luth no way  
But tel me what ye seke by your fay  
Parauenture it may the better be  
Thys old folk can much thyng quod she  
My leue moder quod thys knyght certyn  
I nam but ded but yf that I can sayn

## The Wyf of Bathes tale

What thyng it is that women most desire  
Coude ye me wissh I wol quyte wel your hire  
Paight me thy trouthe here in my hondz qd she  
The next thyng that I requyre the  
Thou shalt it do yf it lye in thy myght  
And I wol telle it you or it be myght  
Haue here my trouthe quod þ knyght I graunte  
Than quod she I dar wel make auaunte  
Thy lyf is sauf for I wol stonde ther by  
Wop on my lyf the quene wol say as I  
Let see whych is the proudest of hem alle  
That werth on othir leuerchepes or calle  
That dar say nay of that I wol the teche  
Let vs go forth wythout more speche  
Tho rolbred she a ppyl in hys ere  
And ludy hym be glad and haue no fere  
When they be comyn to the court thys knyght  
Sayde he kepte hys day as he had byght  
And redy was hys answere as he sayde  
ful many a nobyl wyf and many a mayde  
And many a wydolb for that they be wyse  
The quene hir self sittynge as justyse  
Assemblid then this answere for to here  
And aftirward this knyght was lodyd tapere  
To euery wyght was comaundyd silence  
And that the knyght shold telle in audience  
What thyng that wordly women loue best  
This knyght stood not styll as doth a kest  
But to hys question anon answered  
Wyth manly voys that all the court it herde  
My liege lady thenne general quod he  
Women desiren to haue souereynete  
As wel of her husbandis as of hys loue  
And for to ben in maysterie aboue  
Thys is your most desire though ye me kylle  
Doth as you list I am here at your wyll  
In al the court ne was ther wyf ne mayde  
Ne wydolb that contraryd that he sayde

## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

But sayde he was worthy to haue hys wyf  
And wyth that word he stert thys old wyf  
Whiche þe knyght fonde sittynge on þe grene  
Mercy quod she my souereyn lady quene  
Er that your court departe as doth me right  
I taught thys answer vnto this knyght  
For whiche he plighte me hys trouthe there  
The firste thyng I wolde hym requyre  
He wolde hit do yf it lay in hys myght  
Befor thys court than I pray the sir knyght  
Quod she that thou me take vnto thy wyf  
For wel thou wotist þe I haue saued thy lyf  
If I swere fals swere nay vpon thy fey  
The knyght answered allas and wel a wey  
I woot right wel that such was my felise  
For goddis leue ches a nelve request  
Take al my good and lat my body go  
Nay than quod she I shalbe vs bothe tbo  
For though that I be foul old and poure  
I wol not for al the metal and the our  
That vnder the ground lyeth othir aboue  
But I thy wyf were and eke thy loue  
My loue quod he nay but my dampnacion  
Allas that euer ony of my nacion  
So foule sholde euer dysperaged be  
But al for nought the ende is thus that he  
Constreyned was nedis muste he her wedde  
And take hys old wyf and go to bedde  
Nold wolde some men sayn parauenture  
For myn negligence I do no cure  
To telle you the joye and al the away  
That atte feste was that ilke day  
To whiche thyng shortly I answer shal  
I say there was no feste ne joye at al  
There nas but heynnes and muchel sorow  
For pryncely he weddyd her by the morow  
And al day after hydd hym as an olde  
So wol was hym hys wyf hold so foule

## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Gret was the wo þ the knyght had in thought  
Wen he was wyth his wyf a lende þ brought  
H: walwyth and he turnyth to and fro  
His olde wyf lay symplyng euer mo  
And sayd: o dere husband: benedict  
Forth euery knyght thus with his wif as þe  
Is this the salve of kyng Arthurs hous  
Is euery knyght of his loue so daungewous  
I am your olben loue and eke your wyf  
I am she wyf that saued hath your lyf  
And artis yet I dede you neuer vnyght  
Why fare þe thus wyth me the first nyght  
Þe fare lyke a man hadde lost his wyf  
What is my gylt for goddis loue telle me it  
And it shal be amended: þf that I may  
Amendyd: quod: this knyght alas nay nay  
It wol not be amendyd: neuer the mo  
Thou art so lothly and so old: also  
And thereto comy n of so loll a kynde  
That lytil wonder is though I walolb & wynde  
So wolde: god quod: he myn herte wolde breste  
Be this quod: she the cause of your vntrest  
Þe certeyn quod: he no wonder it is  
Nolb she quod: she I coude amende al this  
Þf that me lyst or hyt be dayes thre  
So wel þe myght here you vnto me  
But for þe spekyng of such gentylnes  
As is descendyd: out of old: riches  
That therfore þe shul be gentylmen  
Such arwgaunce is not worth an peny  
Loke who is most vertuous allwey  
Privy and apert and most entendyth a þ  
To do the gentylste dedis that he can  
Take hym for the greetist gentelman  
Cryste wol we clayme of hym our gentylnes  
Not of our eldres for her old: riches  
For though they geue vs all her scriftage  
For which we claymen to be of hygh parage

## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Yet may they not bequede for nothyng  
To none of us for vertuous luyng  
That made hem gentylmen callid to be  
And had us folowe hem in such degre  
Wel can the wyse poet of Florence  
That hyght daunte speke of this sentence  
So in such manere ryme is dauntis tale  
ful selde by usith by his braunchis smale  
Prollesse of man for god of his goodnes  
Wol that of hym we clayme our gentylnes  
For of our oldris may we nothyng clayme  
But temporel thyng that may hurte & mayme  
Eke euery wyght boote this as wel as I  
If gentylnes were plantid naturally  
Unto a certeyn synage down the lyne  
Dryp and part than wol they neuer fyne  
To do of gentylnes the feyr offyce  
They myght do no bylonny or byce  
Take fyre & here it in to the darkeste hous  
Betwix this and the mounte of Cancaus  
And leet men shyte the doris and go thence  
Yet wol the feyr as fayr lye and brenne  
As twenty thousand men myght it holde  
His offyce naturelly as wol he holde  
Op peryl of my lyf tyl that it dye  
Here may ye see how that gentrye  
Is not annexed to possessioun  
Such folk ne doth for operacioun  
Alwey as doth the fyre so in his kynde  
For god it boote men may ful ofte fynde  
A lordis sone do shame and bylonny  
And he that wol haue price of his gentrye  
For he was born of a gentyl hous  
And hadde his eldis nobyl and vertuous  
And nyl hem self do no gentyl dedis  
He folowen his gentyl auncetris that dede is  
He is not gentyl he he duk he he erle  
If he bylegne synful dedis makyn a chere

## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

For gentylnes nys but the renome  
Of thygh auncestres for her hygh bounte  
Whiche is a straunge thyng to thy persone  
Thy gentylnes comyth fro god alone  
Thin comyth our very gentylnes of grace  
It was nothyng lequedyn vs with our place  
Thin kyth hold nobyl as seyth Valerius  
Was that Romaine Tullius Hostilius  
That out of pouert wos to hygh noblesse  
Redyth Senek and redyth ek Boec  
There shul ye se expres that no drede is  
That he is gentyl that doth gentyl dede  
And therefore leue husbonde thus I conclude  
Were it that myn auncestres were rude  
Yet may the hye god and so hope I  
Graunte me grace to lyue vertuously  
Than am I gentyl when I begynne  
To lyue vertuously and do alwey synne  
And there as ye of pouerte me repreue  
That hygh god on whom holly we beleue  
In wyllful pouerte ches to ledde hys lyf  
And cetera euery man mayden or wyf  
May vnderstonde that Ihesus kyng  
He wold not chese a vyceus synge  
Glad pouert is a ful honest thyng ceteryn  
Thys wol Senek and other clerkis seyn  
Who so that holdyth hym payd of hys pouert  
I holde hym ryght and he had not a ftert  
He that conceytyth he is a ful poure wyght  
For he wold haue that is not in hys myght  
But he that nought hath ne conceytyth to haue  
Is ryght al though ye hold hym but a knaue  
Very pouerte is synne properly  
Juuenal speketh therof ful meryly  
The poure man when he goth by the wey  
Before the theuys he may synge and pley  
Pouert is hateful good and as I ges  
A ful gret fyrnger out of besynes

## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

A greet amender eke of sapience  
To hym that takyth it in paaence  
Pouerte is this al though it seme elenge  
Possessioun þ̄ noman woldz gladly chalenge  
Pouerte ful ofte w̄han a man is wolbe  
Makyth hys godz andz eke hym self to knolbe  
Pouert a spectakyl is as thynkyth me  
Therow w̄hyche he may hys very frendys see  
Andz therfore sit sith therin ye be greuedz  
Of my pouert late me nomore be repleuedz  
Nolv sit there as of elde ye repleue me  
Andz certis s̄re though none auctorite  
Were in the book ye gentyllys of honour  
Sayn that men sholdz an oldz wyght fauour  
Andz cleppoz fader for theyr gentylnes  
Andz auctours shal I fynde as I ges  
Nolv there as ye say I am foul andz oldz  
Than drede ye not to be made cokoldz  
For fylthe elde andz foul so mot I the  
Been greet wardeyns vpon chastyte  
But natheles sith I knolbe your delyt  
I shal fulfyllc your wordly appetyt  
Ekes nolv quod she one of thise thyngis thre  
To haue me oldz andz foul tyl that I deye  
Andz be to you a trewe humble wyf  
Andz neuer you dysplese in al my lyf  
Or ellis ye shal haue me yongz andz feyr  
Andz take your auenture of the reyre  
That to your hous shal be by cause of me  
Or in some other place may wel be  
Now ekes w̄ether that ye lyketh  
Thys knyght aysith hym andz siketh  
But at the laste he sayd in thys manere  
My lady my loue andz my wyf so dere  
I put me fully in your wyse gouernaunce  
Eke it your self whiche may be more plesaunce  
Andz most honour to you andz to me also  
I do no force the w̄thyr of the two

## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

But as you likyth it suffisith to me  
Than I haue gotte of you þe maistrise quod she  
Syn I may chese and gouerne you as me leste  
þe certis wyf quod she I holde it for the best  
Exys me quod she we be no lenger wroth  
For by my trouthe I wol to you be both  
That is to say bothe fayr and eek good  
I pray to god that I muste sterue wood  
But I to you be also good and trewe  
As euer was wyf syn the world was nelwe  
And but I be to morow as fayr to sene  
As ony lady emperesse or quene  
That is betwix the est and the west  
Doth wyth my lyf and deth as you list  
And so they slepte tyl it was morow gray  
And then she sayd when it was day  
Cast vp the curtyn loke how it is  
And when the knyght saw verylly al this  
That she so fayr was and so yonge therto  
For joye he sent her in hye armys two  
Hys herte was bathyd in a bath of blis  
A thousand tyme arowhe he gan hyr kys  
She obeyed hym in euery thyng  
That myght do hym plesaunce or likyng  
And thus they lyue vnto her lyues ende  
And parfyt joye and ihu crist be sende  
Husbandis make yonge & fressh a bedde  
And grace to ouer lyue hem that we wedde  
And eke I pray ihu crist for her lyues  
That wol not be gouerned by her wyues  
And olde and angry nygards of dyspence  
God sende hem sone a very pestilence

Here endyth the tale of the wyf of bathe

And Here begynneth the fixis prologe

## The Frenis Prologe

**T**his nobil symptour this worthye frere  
He made allwey a manere bournyng clere  
Up on the sompnour but for honeste  
No byleyns word: as yet to hym spak he  
But atte laste he sayd: Vnto the wyf  
Hail dame qd he god yeue you right good lyf  
Ye haue here touchyd: also moot I the  
In scole mater a ful greet dyffyeulte  
Ye haue sayd: muche thyng: right wel I se ye  
But dame here as ye ryden by the wey  
As nedpyth not to speke but of game  
And lette auctorytes on goddis name  
To prechynge and to scole of clergye  
And yf it lyke Vnto thys companye  
I wol you of a sompnour telle a game  
Parde ye molbe wel knolwen by the name  
That of a sompnour may no good: he sayd:  
I pray that none of you be euyl apayde  
A sompnour is a renner vp and: down  
Wyth maundementis for fornycation  
And: is y lette at euery tollnyng ende  
Our hooste than spak a sere ye shold: he hende  
And: curtyse as a man of your estat  
In company we wol haue no deliat  
Tellyth your tale and: let the sompnour be  
May quod: the sompnour let hym say by me  
What so hym lyst when it comyth to my lot  
By god: I shal hym quyte euery grot  
I shal hym telle whypele a greet honour  
It is to be a flatteryng: symptour  
And: of many another maner cyme  
Whypele nedpyth not to reherce at thys tyme  
And: hys offyce I shal hym telle yllys  
Our hoost answerd: yes nomore of thys  
And: aftyr thys he sayd: Vnto the frere  
Tel forth your tale myn olbyn mayster dere

Here endyth the Frenis prologe

## The Frieris Tale



Here begynneth the frieris Tale

**W**hilon ther was dwellynge in my contrie  
 An archdeken a man of hygh degre  
 That holdy dyde wel execution  
 In punysshynge of fornicacion  
 Of whoredom and eke of laudye  
 Of dyffamacion and auoutye  
 Of chyrche reue and of testamentis  
 Of contract and of lak of sacramentis  
 Of Burpe and eke of symonye also  
 But certis lechours dyde se grette woo  
 They shold synge yf that they were sent  
 And smale tythers also were foule sent  
 If ony persone wold vpon hem pleyne  
 There myght aserte no pecunyal payne

## The Frieris Tale

For smale tythes and smale offerynge  
He made the peple ful pytously to synge  
For o: þe bysshop caught hym wyth hys hook  
They were in the archdekenys book  
And than hadde he thourgh hys Jurisdiction  
Poure of hem to do ful correction  
He hadde a sompnour redy to hys hond  
A flygler for was none in Engeland  
For setyfly he hadde hys espyall  
That taughte hym where he myghte auayll  
He coude spare of lechours one or twe  
To teler hym to four and twenty mo  
For though þe sompnour wood were as an hare  
To teler hys harlotrye I wol not spare  
For we be out of hys correction  
They haue of vs no Jurisdiction  
Ne neuer shal tyme of al her luyes  
Peter so be women of the styues  
Quod the sompnour put out of our cure  
Pees wyth myschaunce & wyth mysaventure  
Sayd our host and leet hym teler hys tale  
Now tel forth though the sompnour gale  
He sparyth not myn olben mayster dere  
Thys fals theef the sompnour quod the fere  
Hadde allway redy saluys to hys honde  
As ony halvk is to the cure in Engeland  
That told hym al the sere that they knele  
For her acquyntaunce was nat a men of nelbe  
They were al hys approlbers pruely  
He took hym self a greet prouffyt therby  
Hys mayster knew not allway what he was  
Wythouten maundementis a leldy man  
He coude sompne on pyne of cristis cure  
And they were glady for to fylle hys pure  
And make hym greet festis at the nale  
And ryght as Judas hadde pursis smale  
And was a theef right such a theef was he  
Hys mayster hath but half hys dute

## The Jfrenis Tale

He was yf I ſhal yve hym hys laude  
A theef a Sompnour ande eke a laude  
He hadde eke wenchys at hys rent  
That whither that ſyre Robert or ſyre Hue  
Or Jacke or Raaf or who ſo that it were  
That lay by hem they told hym in hys ere  
Thus were the wenchys ande he of one aſſent  
Ande he wold ſet a faynyd maundement  
Ande ſompne hem to the chaptyre bothe tibo  
Ande ylle the man ande lette the wench go  
Than wold he ſay frend I ſhal for thy ſake  
Do ſerpe the out of our lettris blake  
The dar nomore as in thys cas trauayle  
I am thy frend there I may the auayle  
Certeyn he knel of hysours meny mo  
Than poſſible is to telle in yris tibo  
For in thys world nys dogge for the ſolwe  
That can an hurt dere from an ſool knolwe  
Better tha this ſompnour knel a ſpye lechour  
Or auouter or ellis ony Paramour  
Ande for that was the frunt of al hys rent  
Therefore on it he ſette alle hys entent  
Ande ſo ſeyl that onys by on a day  
Thys ſompnour was euer waytyng his pray  
For to ſompne an old wyf a felyfe  
Feynyng a cauſe for he wold haue a wyfe  
It hapid that he ſalb befor hym ryde  
A gay yeman vnder a foreſt ſyde  
A ſolwe he hiar ande arollys bryght ande kene  
He ſande vpon hym a courtpe of grene  
An hat by on hys hed wyth ſerengis blake  
Syre quod the ſompnour ſeyl ande wel I take  
Welcome quod he ande curry good felab  
Whithir rydyſt þ vnder this grene wode ſhalb  
Sande thys yoman wolt thou ferre to day  
Thys ſompnour anſwerd ande ſayd nay  
Here faſte by quod he is myn entent  
To rydyn for to ryſe by al the rent

## The Grete Tale

That longyth now to my lordis duete  
Art thou than a knyght ye quod he  
He ne durste for belonpe and shame  
Say that he was a sompneur for the name  
Deperdur quod this yeman dere brother  
Thou art a knyght and I am another  
I am Unknolven now in this contre  
Of thyng acquyntaunce thence I pray the  
And celi of bretherhod yf that thou lyst  
I have gold and siluer in my chyst  
Yf that the happith to come in our shyre  
Al shal be thyng ryght as thou wolt desyre  
Gramercy quod this sompneur by my feyth  
Euerich in other hond his trouthe he lepyth  
For to be sworn brethern tyl they dye  
In dalvaunce they ryde forth and pleye  
This sompneur whiche was ful of jangelis  
As ful of benym as thise livery hanglis  
And euer enquyringe vpon euery thyng  
Brother ad he where is now your dwellyng  
Another day yf that I shal you seeke  
This yeman hym answerd wyth softe speke  
Brether quod he fer in the north cuntre  
Where as I hope somtyme I shal the see  
Er we departe I shal the so wel lye  
That of my hous ne shalt thou neuer mys  
Now brother quod this sompneur I you pray  
Teche me whyles we ryden by the way  
Syn that ye be a knyght and so am I  
Some subtyl and tellyth me feythfully  
In myn offyce how I may most lpyne  
And sparith not for conscience ne synne  
But dere brother tel me how do ye  
Now by my trouthe dere brother sayd he  
As I shal telle the a faythful tale  
My wagis be ful secrete and ful smale  
My lord is hard to me and daungerous  
And myn offyce is ful labourous

## The Jfrenis Tale

And therefore by extorsions I lye  
For soth I take all that men wol me yeue  
Algate by strength or by violence  
From peer to peer I wyne all my dyspence  
I can no better telle the feythfully  
Nolb artis quod the sompnour so fare I  
I spare not to take god it boot  
But yf it be to kepe or to hoot  
That I may gete in counsel pryuelly  
Nomore conscience of that haue I  
Here myn extorsion I myght not lye  
He of suche japis wol I not be shryue  
Stoma3 ne conscience knolb I none  
I shalbe the shypfardis euerichone  
Wel be we met by god and by saynt Jame  
But leue brothyr tel me thy name  
Quod this sompnour in this mene wyse  
This yeman gan a lytyl forto se  
Brothyr quod he wolte thou that I the telle  
I am a fend my dwellyng is in helle  
And here I ride aboute my purchasyng  
To wyte yf men wol yeue me any thyng  
To purchace is the effect of al my rent  
Loke how thou rydest for al the same entent  
To wyne good thou rekyst neuer how  
Ryght so fare I for ryde wolde I nolb  
Unto the worldis ende for a pray  
A quod the sompnour benedicte what ye say  
I wende ye hadde been a yoman trewe  
Ye haue a manys shap as wel as I  
Haue ye than a fygure determinat  
In helle there ye be in your estat  
May certynly quod he there haue we noon  
But wshyn be lykth we can take be on  
Or ellis make you bene we be shap  
Somtyme lyke a man e somtyme lyke an ape  
Or lyke an aunge? can I ryde or go  
It is no wonder thyng though it be so

## The Grete Tale

A wolpy iogolour can dysceyue the  
Andy parde yet more craft can I than he  
Why quod the sompnour ryde ye than or goon  
In sundry shap andy not allwey in oon  
For he quod he wol be in such fourme make  
As most auayl is our prayes for to take  
What makyth you to haue al thys labour  
Wel many a cause leue syre sompnour  
Sayde thys fender but al thyng hath tyme  
For day is short andy it is passyd prime  
Andy yet ne gat I nothyng in thys day  
I wol entende to bynnyng of I may  
Andy not entende our byttis to declare  
For brothy: myne thy byttis ben al to fare  
To vnderstonde al though I tolde hem the  
But for thou ayst why labour we  
For somtyme we be goddis instrumentis  
Andy mence to do hys comaundementis  
When that hym lise vpon hys creaturis  
In dyuers aces andy in dyuers figuris  
Wythoute hym we haue no myght certeyn  
Of that hym lyst to stonden there ageyn  
Andy somtyme at our prayer haue we leue  
Only the body andy not the soule to greue  
Wytnes of Job whome we dyde woo  
And som tyme haue we myght on bothe also  
Thys is to say on soule andy on body eek  
Andy somtyme we be suffrid for to seke  
Op on a man andy do hys soule vntreke  
Andy not hys body andy al is for the beste  
When he wythstandyth our temptation  
It is a cause of hys saluacion  
Al be it that it was not our entent  
He shold be saaf by goddis Jugement  
Andy somtyme we be scruaunt vnto man  
As to the archbysshop saynt Dunstan  
Andy to the apostyl scruaunt eke was I  
Yet tel me quod the sompnour feythfully

## The Iheris Tale

Make ye your bodyes in such wyse alway  
Of elementis the fendy answerd; nay  
Som tyme we saynyng & som tyme we aryse  
Wyth dede bodyes in fele sondry wyse  
And speke as resonabyl fayre and wel  
As the Phytomyse dyd; to Samuel  
And yet wol some men sayn it was not he  
I do nofor of your dyspnyte  
But o thyng; warne I the I wol not jape  
Thou wolt wete algatis how we be shape  
Thou shalt here aftyrward; my brother wete  
Come wher it nedyth not of me to lere  
For thou shalt by thy othen experyence  
Conne in the chaper wete of this sentence  
Better than Virgile whyle he was on lyue  
Or daunte also nold leet be ryde helyue  
For I wol hold; company wyth the  
Tyl it be so that thou forsake me  
Nay quod; the sompnour that shal not letyde  
I am a yeman that knolven am ful wyde  
My trouthe wol I hold; to the as in this caas  
For though were the duyf Sathanas  
My trouthe wyll I hold; to the my brother  
As I am sworn and; cke of be tyl other  
For to be trewe brother in this caas  
And; sothe we goon aboute our pourceis  
Take thou thy part of that men wol the reue  
And; I shal myne thus may we sothe lyue  
And; yf that ony of be haue more than other  
Let hym be trewe and; parte wyth his brother  
I graunte quod; the duyf by my fey  
And; wyth þ; word; they riden forth hyr wey  
And; right at an entre of a collynys ende  
To which þ; sompnour shoop hym forth to wende  
They saw a carte that charged; was wyth þ; wey  
Whyle that a carter drof forth in the wey  
Deep was the wey for whyle the carte stood;  
This carter smoot & arde as he were wood;

## The Freer's Tale

What hert brok hert scot spare ye for the stonys  
The fend quod: se you fetch body and bonys  
As ferforth as ever ye were y folid?  
So mykyl wo as I haue for you tholid?  
The deuyll haue all bothe hors cartte and sey  
Quod: the sompnour here shal we haue a pley  
And neer þ feend se droll as naught ne were  
Ful pryncely and rollned: in hys ere  
Herken my brother herken by thy feyth  
Heryst thou not holl the carter seyth  
Take it anone for se hath yene it the  
Both sey and cart & eek hys capullis thre  
Nay quod: the deuyll god: boot neuer a deel  
It is not hys entent trust me weel  
Aske hym self yf that thou trolvest not me  
O: ellys seynt a whyle and thou shalt see  
Thys carter thackyd: hys hors on the croupe  
And they legonne to dralbe and to scoupe  
Hart noll quod: se that ihu cryst you bless  
And al hys hondy work bothe more and les  
That was wel y tlight myn olben lyard boy  
I pray god: to saue the and saynt loy  
Noll is my cartte out of the slough parde  
Lo brother quod: the fend: what told: I the  
Here may ye see myn olben dere brother  
The chyle spak o thyng: & thoughte another  
Lat he go forth aboute our wyage  
Here bynne I nothyng: vpon thys carpage  
Whan þ they comyn somwhat out of the toun  
Thys sompnour to hys brother gan to roun  
Brother quod: se here wonyth an old: releeke  
That hadde almost as leef to lese her necke  
As forto yene a peny of her good:  
I wol haue twelft pene though þ six se wood:  
O: I wol semon: hyr vnto our offyce  
And yet god: boot of hyr I knolbe no wyte  
But for thou canst not as in thys contre  
Wyne thy cost take here ensaumple of me

## The Jfrenis Tale

Thys sompnour clappid at the widowis gate  
Come out he sayd thou old? Verry trate  
I trolb thou hast som preest or fere wyth the  
Who knockyth sayd thys wyf benedicate  
God saue you sire what is your swete wyf  
I haue quod the sompnour of the a byl  
Op on pyne of cursynge like that you be  
To morow befor the Archdekenys kne  
To answere to the court of certeyn thyng  
Nolb lord? quod she Jhu cryste heuene kyng  
So wyfely helpe me as I ne may  
I haue be sike and that ful many a day  
I may not go so fer quod she ne ryde  
But I be ded? so prayeth it in my syde  
May I nat aye a lyfel spre sompnour  
And? answere there by my prokour  
To such thyng as men wol appose me  
Yes quod the sompnour pay anon let see  
I welf pens to me and? I wol the quyte  
I shal no prouffyt haue therby but lyte  
My mayster hath the prouffyt and? not I  
Come of and? let me ryde hastely  
Peue me I welf pens for I may no longer tary  
I welf pens quod she a lady saynt mary  
So wyfely helpe me out of care and? synne  
Thys wyde world? though I shold? it wyne  
Ne haue I not I welf pens wyth in my holde  
Ye knolbe wel that I am your and? olde  
Exthe your almes on me your wretche  
May than quod she the soule send? me feteche  
If I the excuse though thou sholdyst be spylt  
Alas quod she god? boot I am not in þ gyft  
May me quod she or by swete saynt anne  
I wol anone be alwey thyn nelbe panne  
For wete wyfely thou owest me of old?  
When that thou madyst thyn husband? cokcolde  
I payde at hom for thy correction  
Thou lyest quod she by my sauacion

## The Jereis tale

He was I neuer or nold byddolb ne byf  
Sompned? vnto your court in al my byf  
He neuer I was but of my body felbe  
vnto the deupl blak and colbgh of helbe  
Peur I thy body and eke my panne also  
And when the deupl herde hyr curse so  
Dop on her knees/ he sayd? in thys manere  
Nold mayell myn olben moder dere  
Is thys your byl in earnest as ye seye  
The deupl quod? she sette hym or he deye  
And panne and al but he byl hym repent  
May olde scot that is not myn entent  
Quod? the sompnour forto repent me  
For ony thyng? that I haue had? of the  
I wold? I finde thy smok and euey cloth  
Nold brothy? quod? the deupl he not broth  
Thy body and thys panne is myn by ryght  
Thou shalt byth me to selle yet to nyght  
Where thou shalt knowe of our pryuyte  
More than a mayster of dyuynte  
And byth that word? the foul fend? hym sent  
Body and soule he byth the deupl went  
Where that thys sompnours haue her freytage  
And god? that made afty? hys ymage  
Mankynde saue and gyde be al and some  
And leue that sompnours gode men become  
Lordeyng? I coude telle you quod? the frey  
Hadde I had leue for thys sompnour here  
Afty? the text of cryst Poule and John  
And of our other doctours meny on  
Such paynes as your hertis myght agryse  
Al be it so that no tinge may I deuse  
Though that I myght a thousand bynter telle  
The paynes of that cursid? hous of selle  
But forto kepe be fro that cursid? place  
Waketh and prayeth Iesu of hys grace  
So kepe be fro the temptour Sathanas  
Herkenyth this word? selbaar as in this caas

## The Sompnours prologe

The lyeun sittyth in hys albayte all day  
To sle the Innocent yf that he may  
Dyspose ye your firtis ay to lypthstonde  
The fendz that wol make you thral & bonde  
He may not tempte you oyr your myght  
For ayse wol be your champpoun & knyght  
And praye that the sompnour hym repente  
Of hys mysdoys or that the deupl hym sent

Here endyth the firtis tale

And begynnith the Sompnours prologe

**T**his sompnour in his scitop high stood  
Upon this fere his lert was so wood  
That lik an aspyr leet he quook for pre  
Lordingis quod he o thyngz I desyre  
I ren lesse of your curtesye  
Synthe ye haue herd thys fals fere lye  
As suffryth me I may my tale telle  
Thys fere woseyth that he knolbeth alle  
And god woot that is lytill wonder  
Fertis and fendis been but lytil a sunder  
For parde ye haue ofte tyme herd telle  
Wolb that a fere raupffled was to selle  
In spyrte onys by a dyuoun  
And as an aungel ledde hym vp & down  
To shewe hym the tormentes that were there  
In al the place ne salb he not a fere  
Of othyr folk he salb ynowe in wo  
Wnto thys aungel spak the fere tho  
Nolb syre quod he haue fertis such a grace  
That none of hem shal come in thys place  
Yes quod the aungel many a mylloun  
And wnto Sathanas he ladde hym a deun  
And nolb hath Sathanas such a tayl  
Bradder than of a Carik is the sayl  
Hold vp thy tayl thou sathanas quod he

## The Sompnours Prologe

Stelb forth thyn ars and let the freer see  
Where is the nest of freeris in thys place  
And er that a furlonge lye of space  
Ryght so as bees swarme out of an hyue  
Out of the deuchis ars they goon dryue  
Elbenty thousand freeris on a Foute  
And thordib out telle swarmed all aboute  
And cam ageyn as faste as they may goon  
And in to hys ars they crept in euerychon  
He clappyd ageyn hys tayl and lay styll  
Thys freer when he lokid and hys fylle  
Up on the tormentis of thys sorp place  
Hys spirit god restorpd of hys grace  
Onto hys body ageyn and he albrook  
But natheles for fear yet he quok  
So was the deupls ars ay in hys mynde  
Than is it hys herptage of Berry kynde  
God saue you alle saue thys cursid freer  
My prologe byl I ende in thys manere

Here endyth the Sompnours Prologe

## The Sompnours tale



Here begynneth the Sompnours tale

**I**n Ordynge ther is in york shire as I gesse  
A meresh contre that callyd is holdernesse  
In whiche ther wente a symptour aboute  
To preche & eke to begge it is no doute

And so befyl that on a day thys fere  
Hadde prechyd in a chyrche in hys manere  
And specially abouen euery thyng  
Excytyd he the pepyl in hys prechyng  
To trentalis and to peue for goddis sake  
Where wyth men myght holy housis make  
There as deuyne scrupse is honourid  
Nat there it is wastyd and deuourid  
Ne there it nedyth not to be payn  
As to possessioners that molde byyn

## The Sompnours Tale

Thankyd he god in wele and habundaunce  
Trentals sayd he delyuereyn from penaunce  
Hete frendys soules as wel olde as yonge  
Ye whan they be so hastely y songe  
Not for to holde a prest joly and gay  
He syngeth not but o masse on a day  
Delyuere th out anone quod he the soules  
ful hard it is wyth flesschook & oules  
To beyn I clalved or to brenne or bake  
Nolw speke you hastely for crystis sake  
And whan this frete had sayd al hys entent  
Wyth qui cum patre/forth hys wey he went  
Whan folk in the chyrche had yene what he wist  
He wente hys wey no lenger wold he rest  
Wyth skryppe and tippid staf y tikkid hys  
In euery hous he gan to poure and pryce  
And beggid mele or cise or ellis corn  
Hys felaw had a staf I tippyd wyth horn  
A pyre of tablis of clene puory  
And a poyntel y welssed fetously  
And wroot the namys allwey as he stood  
Of al the folk that pas hym ony good  
Askaunce that he wold for hem preyce  
Yeue vs a bussel whete malte or weye  
A goddis kycheyl or a cyp of chese  
Or ellis what you list I may not cise  
A goddis half peny or a masse peny  
Or yeue vs of your braun yf ye haue ony  
A dagon of your blanket leue dyme  
Our sustyr dere so here I wyte your name  
Bacon or beef or suete thyng as ye fynde  
A seurey harbot wente hyr ay fshynde  
That was hyr ofte and euer he haue a salt  
And what men pas hym leyde it on hys back  
And whan he was oute att dore anon  
He planedy alway the namys euerychon  
That he leforn hadde wyte in hys tablys  
He scrupyd hem wyth nyfles and wyth fablis

## The Sompnour's tale

May there thou lyste Sompnour quod þe freere  
Þees quod our hoost for cristis modys dere  
Tel forth thy tale and spare it nat at al  
So thyrue I quod the sompnour so I shal  
So longe he wente from hous to hous tyl he  
Cam to an hous there he was wont to be  
Restesshyd more than in an hundred plaas  
Sake lay the good man whoos the place is  
Wedrede þp on a colbecke solbe he lay  
Deus hic quod he O Thomas good day  
Sayde thys freere curtesly and soft  
Thomas quod he god yelde you ful ofte  
I haue on thys bench yfate ful weel  
Here haue I clyn many a mery meel  
And fro the bench he droof albey the cat  
And leyde a down hys potent and hys bat  
And eke hys skryppe & sette hym soft a down  
Hys felaw was go walkyng in to the toun  
Forth wyth hys knaue in to that hosterpe  
Where as he stoope hym that myght to lye  
O dere mayster sayde he thys like man  
How haue ye faryn syn march began  
I salb you nat thys fourtemyght ne more  
God woote quod he labouryng haue I ful fore  
And specially for thy saluacion  
Haue I sayde many a precious oryson  
And for our othyr freendis god hem blesse  
I haue thys day be at your chyrche at mess  
And sayde a sermon to myselvyd wyt  
Nat after the pleyn text of holy wyrt  
For it is hard to you as I suppose  
And therefore telle I you all the glose  
Glosyng is a ful glorpyous thyng certeyn  
For le ttre sleeth as we clerkis syn  
There haue I taught hem to be charitable  
And iuende her good ther it is resonable  
And ther I salb our dame where is she  
Ponder in the yerde I trow that she be

## The Sompnours Tale

Saydþ thys man andþ she wol come anon  
Ep mayster wel come be ye by saynt John  
Sayde thys wyf holþ faste ye heretely  
Thys fere arysith by ful courtowsly  
Andþ here embrasith in hys armys narow  
Andþ kysith hys swete & churlyth as a sparrow  
Wyth hys lippis/dame quodþ he right wel  
As he that is your seruaunt euerydeel  
Thankyth he godþ that pass you soule andþ lyf  
Yet salþ I nat to day so fayr a wyf  
In all the chyrche so godþ saue me  
Ye godþ amende the fautes syne quodþ she  
Algas wel come ye be by my fey  
Gymercy dame that haue I founde allwey  
But of your greet goodnesse by your leue  
I wolþ pray you that ye rou not greue  
I wolþ wyth thomas speke a lytyl throlþe  
Thys Curatours ten ful necligent & scholþe  
To growþ tenderly a manys conscience  
In schyfte andþ in prechynge is my diligence  
Andþ study on petris wordis andþ poulis  
I walke andþ fyssh cristen mennys solþis  
To yelde ihesu crist hys proper rent  
To sprede hys wordys is all myn entent  
Nowþ by your leue dere syne quodþ she  
Thyrdþ hym wel for saynt charyþe  
He is ay angry as is a pestemyþe  
Though that he haue al that he can desyre  
Though I hym wyþe andþ make hym warm  
Andþ ouer hym ley my legþ andþ myn arm  
He growþþ lyk our boz lyth in our sty  
Oþer dysport of hym right noon haue I  
I may not plesþe hym in no maner cas  
O Thomas þe vous dy Thomas Thomas  
Thys makþþ the fendþ thys most be amendingþ  
It is a thyngþ that hygh godþ offendþ  
Andþ therof wolþ I speke a wordþ or twa  
Nowþ mayster quodþ the wyf or that I go

## The Sompnours tale

What wyl ye dyne I wol go ther aboute  
Nolde dame quod he Je Vous dy sauns doute  
Haue I nought of a capon but the lyuer  
And of your wyght breed but a shryue  
And aftyr that a rostid pyggie he dy  
But I ne wolde for me that no best were dede  
Than hinde I wyth you hoole suffisaunce  
I am a man of lytel sustenaunce  
My spirit hath hys fosterynge in the byble  
My body is as so redy and so penyble  
To wake that my body is ful destroyed  
I pray you dame that ye be not annoyed  
Though I you my counsel so frendly shalbe  
By god I nolde haue told it but a felbe  
And spre quod she but o word or I goo  
My chyld is dede with ynne thys wofull wo  
Sone aftyr that ye wente out of thys town  
Hys deeth sal I by reuelacioun  
Saye thys fre at hoom in our dourte  
I dar wel say that wyth ynne half an houre  
Aftyr hys deeth I sal hym bere to hys  
In my bysioun so god my soule wyse  
So dede our Seynt and our fermyer  
That haue be helpe frendes thys fyfty yer  
Thy may nolde god be thankid of hys lene  
Maken her jubilee and walkyn all alone  
And by I roos and al our couent celi  
Wyth many a trete tyllynge on our chere  
Wythouten noyse and clatterynge of bellis  
Te deun was our songe and nothyng else  
Sone aftyr to crist I had an holy oryson  
Thankynge hym of my good reuelacioun  
For spre and dame trustyth me ryght wel  
Our orysones been more effectuel  
And more we see of cristis secret thyngis  
Than forel peple al be they kyngis  
We lyue in pouerte and in abstinence  
And forel folk in ryche and dyspence

## The Sompnours Tale

Of mete and drynke and in foul delys  
We haue the worldis lust al in despyte  
Lazar and diuers lyueden ful dyuersly  
And dyuers guerdone had they ther by  
Who so wol praye muste faste and be clene  
And sette his soule and make his body lene  
We fare as sayth the apostil cloth and food  
Suffysith vs though they be not ful good  
The clenness and the fastynge of vs feres  
Makyth that crist exchertis our prayres  
To moyses forty dayes and xl nyght  
Fastid; or that god ful of his myght  
Spak wyth hym in the mount Synay  
Wyth empty wombe fastynge many a day  
There resceyued he the calve that was wyrtyn  
With goddis synger and hely wel ye wetyth  
In the mount Oreb or he hadde ony speche  
Wyth hygh god that is our lyues leche  
He fastid; longe and was in contemplanse  
Aaron that had the temple in gouernaunce  
And eke the othyr prestis euerychon  
In to the temple whan they shold; goon  
To prayen for the peple and to scrupse  
They nolde drynke in no maner wyse  
No drynke that myght hym drenk make  
But there in abstynence to praye and wake  
Lest that they wyden take he what I say  
But they be sober that for the peple pray  
Ware that I say for it ynolde suffysith  
Our lord Ihesu as holy wyrt deuyfith  
Yaf vs ensaumple of fastynge and prayere  
Therefore be medyauntis be sely feres  
Been weddyd to pouerte and to contynence  
To charyte humylnes and Abstynence  
To persecucion for euery ryghthysnes  
To wepyng mysericorde and to clenness  
And therefore molbe ye see that our prayers  
I speke of vs mendyaunt be feres

## The Sompnours tale

What lyf ye dyne I wol go ther aboute  
Now dame quod he Je vous dy sauns doute  
Haue I nought of a capon but the lyuer  
And of your whyte breed but a shryuer  
And after that a rostid pyggie fed  
But I ne wolde for me that no best were ded  
Than hadde I wyth you hooly suffysaunce  
I am a man of lytyl sustenaunce  
My spirit hath hys fosteryng in the byble  
My body is as so redy and so penyble  
To wake that my body is ful desceyved  
I pray you dame that ye be not annoyed  
Though I you my counsel so frendly stelde  
By god I nolde haue told it but a felde  
And spre quod she but o word or I goo  
My chyld is ded wyth ynnere thys wothis tbo  
Sone after that ye wente out of thys town  
Hys deeth sal I by reuelacioun  
Saye thys fre at noon in our doctoure  
I dar wel say that wyth ynnere half an houre  
After hys deeth I sal hym fore to blys  
In my visioun so god my soule wys  
So dede our Seynt and our fermer  
That haue be trelbe frees thys fyrst peer  
Thy may nolbe god be thanked of hys lene  
Maken for jubilee and walkyn all alone  
And by I was and al our couent celi  
Wyth many a trete tpyllyng on our cheli  
Wythouten noyse and clateryng of bellis  
Te deum was our song and nothyng els  
Sone after to cysse I had an holy oryson  
Thankyng hym of my good reuelacioun  
For spre and dame trustyth me ryght wel  
Our orysones been more effectuel  
And more we see of cysseis secret thyngis  
Than forel peple al be they kyngis  
We lyue in pouerte and in abstinence  
And forel folk in ryche and dyspence

## The Sompnours Tale

Of mete and drynke and in foul delyte  
We haue the worldis lust al in despyte  
Eazar and diuers lyueden ful dyuersly  
And dyuers guerdone had they ther by  
Whoso wol prave muste faste and be clene  
And satte his soule and make his body lene  
We fare as sayth the apostil cloth and food  
Suffysith vs though they be not ful good  
The clenness and the fastyng of vs frenis  
Makyth that crist exceptith our prayris  
To moyses forty dayes and x<sup>e</sup> nyght  
Fastid or that god ful of his myght  
Spak wyth hym in the mount Synay  
Wyth empty wombe fastyng many a day  
There receyued he the calve that was wyrtyn  
With goddis synger and hely wel ye wetyyn  
In the mount Oreb or he hadde ony speche  
Wyth hygh god that is our lyues leche  
He fastid longe and was in contemplanse  
Aaron that had the tempyl in gouernaunce  
And eke the othyr prestis euerychon  
In to the tempyl Iohan they shold goon  
To prayen for the peple and do scrupse  
They nolde drynke in no maner wyse  
No drynke that myght hym dronk make  
But there in abseynece to prave and waite  
Lest that they deyden take he what I say  
But they be sober that for the peple pray  
Ware that I say for it ynolde suffysith  
Our lord Ihesu as holy Iwyt deuyfith  
Pas vs ensaumppel of fastyng and prayris  
Therefore we medyauntis we sely frenis  
Been weddyd to pouerte and to contynence  
To charyte humylnes and Abstynence  
To persecucion for euery ryghtlyfnes  
To wepyng mysericorde and to clenness  
And therefore molbe ye see that our prayris  
I speke of vs mendyaunt we frenis

## The Sompnours Tale

We to the hygh god more exceptable  
Than pouris wyth your festis at your table  
For paradys first yf I shal not lye  
Was man out chysyd for hys ghtenye  
And chaste was man in paradys certeyn  
But herken now thomas what I shal sayn  
I haue no text of it as I suppose  
But I fynde a maner thyng of a glose  
That specyally our swete lord Ihesus  
Spak thys by frenis when he sayd thus  
Blessyd be they that poure in spyrat lven  
And so forth all the gospel molbe ye seen  
Whethyr it be lykier to our professioun  
Or heris that sibymmen in possesioun  
Ife on her doomye and her ghtenye  
And of her leldnesse I hem dffye  
Me thynketh they be lyke to jonnas  
For as a whale and walke lyke a swan  
Al synolent as a kete in the spence  
Her prayer is of ful lpyl reuerence  
When they for soules say the psalme of dauid  
Lo luf they sey For meum cruciat  
Who foloweth crystis gospel and hys fore  
But we that humble be chaste and pore  
Workars of goddis wordis & nat auditours  
Therefore right as an halke vpon hys sours  
Wp spryngyth in to the ayer right so prayeris  
Of charytable and chaste lvy frenis  
Makyn hem solbre to goddis cris ilbo  
Thomas Thomas so moot I ryde or go  
And by that lord that clepyd was saynt Iue  
He thou our brotther lven sholdist þ nat thryue  
For in our chypptre praye we day and nyght  
To cryst to sende the sothe helthe and nyght  
Thy body forth to welden ful hastely  
God boot quod he nothyng ther of fele I  
As help me god as in felbe peris  
Haue I spendyd on many dyuers frenis

## The Sompnours Tale

Ful many a pounde yet fare I neuer the bet  
Certeyn my gooder haue I almost beset  
Farewel my gold for it is al a go  
The fere answerd o Thomas dost thou so  
What nedpeth the dpuers fereis forto seke  
What nedpeth hym that hath a parfyte leche  
To secken othyr lechis in the town  
Your inconstaunce is your confusioun  
Hold ye than me and eke al our couent  
To praye for you be not suffycient  
Thomas that jape is not worth a myte  
Your maladye is for lye haue to lyte  
A peue that couent foure & tibenety grotis  
And peue that couent half a quartyr otis  
And peue that fere a peny and let hym go  
Olay nay Thomas it may nothyng be so  
What is a fertyng worth partid on tibelue  
So eke thyng that is onyd in hym selue  
Is more stronge than when it is skatred  
Thomas of me thou shalt not be flatterd  
Thou woldyst haue our labour al for nought  
The hygh god y al this world hath brought  
Sayth that the workman is worthy hye hye  
Thomas of your tresor nought wol I desire  
As for my self but that al our couent  
To pray for you be as so dyligent  
And forto holde by cristis othen chyrche  
Thomas yf ye wol lerne forto wyse  
Of byldynge vpon chyrches mow ye fynde  
Yf it be good in Thomas lye of ynde  
Ye lye here ful of angyr and of yre  
Wyth wyse the deuyl set your herte on fyre  
And chyden here thys holy innocent  
Your wyf that is here so meke and so payent  
And therefore Thomas trow me yf thou lye  
Ne serue not wyth thy wyf as for the best  
And here thys word alwey nolv by thy sayth  
Touchyng such thyngge/so what the wyse saith

## The Sompnours Tale

Wyth ynnē thy hous ne fe thou no spoun  
 To thy subiectis do thou noon oppressioun  
 He make thyne acquyntaunce not to fle  
 And Thomas yet est sones barne I the  
 Welbaar of her that in thy bosom slepyth  
 Ware fro the serpent that so slily crepyth  
 Wondyr the gras and styngeth ful subtyllly  
 Welbaar my sone and her son paciently  
 That elvety thousand men haue lost her kynges  
 For serpyng with her lemmans & her bynges  
 Nold syn we haue so holy a meke wyf  
 What nedyth you Thomas to make serpyf  
 Ther nys yllys no serpent so cruel  
 Whan a mā treditth vpon his taylor ne knyf so fel  
 As a womman is whan she hath caught an yre  
 Werry vengyaunce is than al her desyre  
 Jre is a synne one of the greet of scurn  
 And ful abhomyndlyl to þe synge of burn  
 And to hym self it is a destruction  
 Thys euery leibd; byear or parson  
 Can sey holl Jre engendryth homyde  
 Jre in soth is the executour of pryde  
 I coude of Jre say right moche sorow  
 That my tale shold; laste tyl to morow  
 And therefore pray I god; bothe day & nyght  
 That to an iuous man god; sende lpyl myght  
 It is gret harm and; certis gret yre  
 To sette an iuous man in hygh d; Jre

**A**thlom ther was an iuous p;state  
 As sayth seneke / that durynge his astate  
 Wpon a day cut ryden knyghtis tibo  
 And; as fortune wold; that it was so  
 That one of hem cam hom that other nought  
 A none the knyght before the iuge is brought  
 That sayd; thus thou hast thy felow slayn  
 For wyfede I deme the to the deth w;teyn  
 And; to ano;yr knyght comaunded; he  
 Go lede hym to the deth I charge the

## The Sompnours Tale

And happyd as they wentyn by the wey  
Toward the place wher he shold be  
The knyght cam whiche men wend had be ded  
Then thought they it were the best need  
To lede hem bothe to the Juge agayn  
They sayden lord the knyght hath not sleyn  
Hys felaw here he stont fool a lyue  
Ye shal be ded quod he so mot' I thynke  
Thys is to say bothe on elbo and thre  
And to the fyrste knyght right thus spak he  
I dampned the thou most algatis be ded  
And thou also most nedis lese thyn hed  
For thou art cause why thy felaw dyeth  
And to the thyrde knyght right thus he seyth  
Thou hast not do that I comaundyd the  
And thus he dyd do hem sw al thre

**I**f Rue Cambyse was eek dronkele  
And ay deltyd hym to be a shrew  
And so kepyl a lord of hys meyne  
That souyd wel vertuous moralyte  
Sayde on a day betwix hem self ryght thus  
A lord is lost yf he be aught vycious  
There is many an eye and many an ere  
Alwaytynge on a lord he not nat where  
And drunkenesse is eke a foul recorde  
Of ony man and namely of a lord  
For goddis loue drynketh more temperatly  
Wyne makyth a man to lese wretchydly  
Hys mynde and eek hys synys euerychon  
The Feuers shalt thou se quod he anon  
And preue it by thyn olben experyence  
That wyne doth to folk such offence  
There is no wyne ferueth me my myght  
Of hond of foot ne of myn eyen sight  
And for despyt he drank much the more  
An hundred part than he dyd before  
And ryght anone this prouis cursyd wretch  
Thys knyghtis sone set before hym fete

## The Sompnours Tale

Comaundyd hym he sholdy befor hym stonde  
And sodeynly he took hys towe in hondy  
And by the strangr he pullid to hys ere  
And wyth an awylbe he slough the childy there  
Nolb wylthyr haue I a siker hondy or none  
Quod he is al my myght and mynde a goon  
Hath wyth terrued me myn eyen sight  
What shold I telle the answer of the knyght  
Hys sone was sleyn there is nomore to say  
Weth wate therfore wyth lordis forto play  
Syngeth place and I shal yf I can  
But yf it be vnto a poure man  
To a poure man men sholdy hys spais telle  
But not to a lordy though he sholdy go to selle

**L**O Jans Cypris that ylle pccpen  
Hobbe destowped by the ryuer of gysen  
For that an hors of his was dreynt ther ynn  
Whan that he wente to babilon for to bynn  
He made that the ryuer was so small  
That men myght ryde and wade ouer all  
So what sayd he that so wel telt he can  
He be no felow to an prous man  
He wyth no woody man walke by the way  
Lest thou repent I wol no forther say  
Nolb Thomas leue brother leef thyn Iw  
Thou shalt me fynde as just as a squere  
Hold nat the deuplys knyght as in thy lre  
Thy anger doth the al to fore smerte  
But stib to me al thy confessioun  
Nay quod the sili man by saynt Symon  
I haue be shypue this day of my curate  
I haue hym told all he ly myn astate  
It nedyth nomore to speke of it sayd he  
But yf it lyst of myn humylyte  
Deue me than of thy good to make our cloyster  
Saide he for many a muske & meny an oyster  
Whan othyr men haue been ful wel at ese  
Haue been our foody our cloyster forto reyse

## The Sompnours Tale

And yet godd boott bnnethe our fundement  
Marfourmed is ne of our churche ful pament  
There is not a tyle wyth ynne our monys  
By godd the olde festy pound for stonys  
Nolb help thomas for hym that barolwed sette  
O: ellis moste be our lokis sette  
And yf men lacke our predycacion  
Than goth the world all to destruction  
For who so wol fro thys world be ferrue  
So godd me saue Thomas by your leue  
He wolde ferrue out of thys world the sonne  
For who can tette and worke as be konne  
And that is nat of lpyt tyme quod he  
But seth help was or helyse  
Haue frenis be that fynde I of recorde  
In churche y thanked be our lord  
Nolb Thomas help for saynt charp  
And down anon he sittyth on hys kne  
Thys sille man luyt nygh woodd for pre  
He wolde that the fere hadde be a fyre  
Wyth hys false dyssymulacion  
Suche thyngis as ben in my possession  
Quod he that may I geue and none othyr  
Ye sey me thus hold that I am your brothyr  
Ye certis quod the fere trustyth me ryght wel  
I took our dame our lettir and our seel  
Nolb wel quod he and somwhat shal I geue  
Onto your holy Couent whyle I lyue  
And in thy hond thou shalt it haue anone  
On thys condicion and othyr none  
That thou depart it so my dere brother  
That euery fere haue as moche as other  
Thys shalt thou swere on thy professioun  
Wythoute fraude or auersacioun  
I swere it quod the fere op on my feryth  
And therewith al hys hond in hys be lepyth  
So fere my feryth in me shal be no lack  
Than put thy hond adoun right by my back

## The Sompnours tale

Seyde thys man and? grope wel he hynde  
Wy nethe my buttoke there shalt thou fynde  
A thyng that I haue hyde in my pryue  
A thoughte thys fere that shal go wyth me  
And? down hys honde he launchyth to the clast  
In hope for to fynde there som good? yeste  
And? when thys sike man fel a thys fere  
About hys welbel grompunge fere and? there  
Ampeyde hys honde he let the fere a fart  
There is no Capul drauyng in a cart  
That myght haue let a fart of such a soun  
The fere vp stert as doth a wood? spoun  
A fuls chole quod? he for Cocks honys  
Thys hase thou in despyt do for the nonys  
Thou shalt abyde thys fart yf that I may  
Hys meyne wyth that ferdyn such away  
Come lepyng in and? chasid? out the fere  
And? forth he goth wyth a ful leuy clere  
And? fet a hys felow there as lay hys ston  
He looked? as he were a bylde boz  
And? gryntyth wyth the teth so was he wroth  
A sturdy paas down to the court he goth  
Wher as there woned? a man of gret honour  
To whome that he was alway confessor  
Thys worthy man was lord? of that bylage  
Thys fere cam as he were in a rage  
Wher as thys lord? sat etyng? at hys borde  
Wher the myght the fere speke o word?  
Tyl atte laste he sayd? god? you se  
Thys lord? gan loke and? sayd? benedicte  
Whit fere John whit maner worlde is thys  
I see wel some thyng? ther is amys  
He loke as though p wood were ful of theys  
Syl down and? tel me whit your greue is  
And? it shal be amendyd? yf I may  
I haue quod? he haue a despyt to day  
God? yelde it you a down in your bylage  
That in thys worlde ther nys so poure a page

## The Sompnours Tale

That he noldȝ haue abhompnacion  
Of that I haue receyuedȝ in the town  
Andȝ yet he greuyth me nothynȝ so sore  
As that the oldȝ chȝrl wythȝ hekeȝ hore  
Blasfemyȝ hath our holy couent eke  
Nolȝ mayster quodȝ the lordȝ I you keſeek  
No mayſtre ſir quodȝ he but ſcryptur  
Though I haue hadȝ in ſcole that honour  
Godȝ likyȝ not that raby men be calle  
Nothȝ in market ne in your large halle  
No fore quodȝ he but tel me all your greef  
Syr quodȝ thys ſtre an odious myſchȝef  
Thys day he tyȝ is to myȝ ordȝe andȝ me  
Andȝ ſo per conſequens in eke degre  
Of holy chȝrche godȝ amende it ſone  
Syr quodȝ the lordȝ ye boot what is to done  
Dyſtemper you not ye be my confeſſour  
Ye be the ſalt of the .erthe andȝ the ſauour  
For goddis loue your patience nolȝ holdȝ  
Tel me your greef andȝ he anon hym toldȝ  
As ye haue ſaydȝ beforȝ ye boot wel what  
The lady of the hous ap ſeylle ſat  
Tyl ſhe hadde ſaydȝ what the frere hadȝ ſaydȝ  
By goddis moder quodȝ ſhe the bliſſyȝ maydȝ  
Is ther aught ellis tel me ſeythfullȝ  
Madame quodȝ he holȝ thynke ye ther by  
Holȝ y me thynkȝth quod ſhe ſo god me ſpede  
I ſay a chȝrl hath do a chȝrlis dede  
What ſholde I ſay godȝ let hym neuer the  
Hys ſpȝke beedȝ is ful of vanpȝe  
I holde hym in a maner of a franſpe  
Madame quodȝ he by godȝ I ſhal not lȝe  
But I in onȝ wyſe may on hym a wreke  
I ſhal dyffame hym ouer al whȝere I ſpeke  
That fals blaſfemur whiche that chargid me  
To parte it that wol not departȝ he  
To euery pȝyke moche wythȝ myſchaunce  
The lordȝ ſat ſeylle as he were in a traunce

## The Sompnours tale

And in hys herte he wolldyd vp and down  
How that thys chorde hath ymagynacioun  
To shewe suche a probleme to the fere  
Neuer erst er nold herd I of suche a matere  
I trolde the deuyll put it in hys mynde  
In aro metryk shal there noman fynde  
Before thys day of such a questioun  
Who shold make a demonstracioun  
That euery man shold haue lyk hys part  
As of a soun or of sauour of a fart  
O nyte prouyd chorde I shrewd hys face  
To sirs quod the lord wyth hardy grace  
Who euer herd of such a thyng or nold  
To euery man y lyke tel me hold  
Hyt is an impossible it may not be  
By nyte chorde godd let hym neuer the  
The rombleng of a fart and euery soun  
Nys but of aye reuerberacioun  
And euer it wasteth lyte and lyte alway  
There is noman can deme by my fey  
If that it were departyd equally  
What to my chorde to yet hold shrewdly  
Unto my confessor to day he spak  
I holde hym certeyn a demonyak  
Nold ete your mete and let the chorde go pley  
Let hym go hange hym self a deuyll wey  
Nold stode the lordis squyre at hys lord  
That carf hys mete and herd word by word  
Of all thys thyng of wyschance I haue you sayd  
My lord quod he be ye not euyl apayd  
For I coude telle for a golde cloth  
To you sirs fere so ye be not broth  
How that thys fart shold cun desyd be  
Amonge your couent yf it like sithe  
Tel quod the lord and thou shalt haue anon  
A golde cloth by godd and by saynt John  
My lord quod he wold that the bedde is fyt  
Wythout wynde or perturbyng of aye

## The Sompnours

Let brynge a carte whyle right in to this halle  
But so that it haue hys spokis alle  
Elders spokis hath a carte whyle compny  
And brynge me thine yn farris woot ye why  
For thertene is a couent as I gesse  
Your confessor here for hys worthynesse  
Shal parfourme by þe noumbir of hys couent  
Than shul they knele down by one assent  
And to euery spokis ende in thys manere  
ful sadly ley hys nose shal a fere  
Your nobyl confessor ther godd hym saue  
Shal hold hys nose vpright vnder the naue  
Than shal this chorle with helpe seyf & tought  
As ony labour hyder be y brought  
And set hym on the whel right of thys cart  
Up on the naue and make hym lete a fart  
And ye shul see by peryl of my lyf  
By preef whyche that is demonstratyf  
That equally the sound of it wol wende  
And eke the styng out at the spokis cende  
Saue that thys worthy man your confessor  
By cause he is a man of gret honour  
Shal haue the first saynt as reson is  
The nobyl blage of farris yet is thys  
The worthiest man of theyn shal first be scrupd  
And certeynly he hath it wel deserupd  
He hath to day taught vs so much good  
With prechynge in the pulpet there he stood  
That I may vouchsaf 3 say for me  
He hadde the first smel of fartis thre  
And so wold all hys brethern hardely  
He berith hym so fayre and so holply  
The lord the lady & eke man saue the fere  
Sayd that Iankyng spak in thys matere  
As wel as Ouyde or Pitholome  
Tolbeckynge the chorle they sayd subtyl  
And hys wyf made hym speke as he spak  
He nys no fool ne no demonpakk

## The Sompnours tale

And Jankyn hath y lbonne a nelbe golbne  
My tale is doon be he almost at toun

Here endeth the Sompnours tale

And foloweth the Prologe of the clerk  
of Ogenford

## The Prologue

Here begynneth the prologue  
Of the clerke of Oxenford /

**H**e clerk of Oxenford our ost sayde  
He was as quoy & styll as doth a mayde  
Were new spousid sittynge at the borde  
This day he herde I of your tynge a word  
I trolde ye study aboute somme sophyne  
But Salamon sayde that al thyng hath tyme  
For goddes sake as he of good chere  
It is no tyme now to study here  
Tel us somme mery tale by your fey  
For what man is entrid in to a pley  
He nedis moot in to the pley assente  
But prechyth not as freres doo in lentre  
To make us for our olde synnes wepe  
Ne that thy tale make us not to slepe  
Tel us som mery thyng of auenturis  
Your termys your coluris and your figuris  
Kepe hem in store til so be that ye endyte  
With style is witten men to kyngys write  
Spekyth so playn at this tyme I wol pray  
That we may vnderstonde what ye say  
This worthy clerk lenygnely answered  
Ost quod he I am vnder your yerde  
Ye haue of us as now the gouernaunce  
And therefore I shal do you okeysaunce  
As fer as reson askyth hardely  
I wol you telle a tale which that I  
Lernyd at Padol of a worthy clerk  
As prouyd is by his wordes and his werke  
He is now dede and napled in his chere  
I pray to god yeue his soule good reste  
Frauncys petrarke the laurate poet  
Wight this clerk whos rethorik swete  
Enlumyned al ytaile of poetrie  
As lympan dyd of philosophy

## The Prologue

Or lalbe or other arte particuler  
But with that wyl not suffre be dwelless here  
But as it were the tlypnyng of an eye  
Them both hath sleyn and al shal we deye  
Wnt forth to telle of thys worthy man  
That taughte me this tale as I began  
I say that first wyth high style he enditeth  
Er he the body of his tale writeth  
A prologue in which discrepueth he  
Of mounte and of Saluce the contree  
And speketh of arpentyn the hylls hye  
That ben the boundes of West Lumburde  
And of mount Vesulus in special  
Writeth that the poe out of the welke smal  
Takynge his first spryngyng and his founte  
That Eselward euer encreaseth in his cours  
To Emeli ward to Ferrare and Venyse  
The which a long thyng were to deuyse  
And trewly as to my judgement  
Me thinketh it a thyng inpertynent  
Saue that hym list conueye his matere  
But this is his tale as ye mow here

Here endyth the prologue

## The clerkis tale of openford



And begynneth the clerkis  
tale of Openford

**T**here is in the west syde of itayle  
Down at the rote of Wesulus the colde  
A lusey playn habundaunt of hitayl  
Where many a town and tour thou mayst beholde  
That founded were in tyme of faders old  
And many another delpectable sight  
And salutes thys noble centre hight

A markis somtyme lord was of that land  
As were his worthy eldres hym before  
And okeysaunt ay redy to his bond  
Were til his sieges bothe lasse and more  
Thus in delyste he lyued and hath do pore  
Welued & drady thorough favour of fortune  
Both of his lordes and eke of his comune

## The clerkis tale of Orenford

Ekerlbyth he was to speke as of synage  
The gentylest y born of lumbarde  
A fair parson a strong and yong offlage  
And ful of honour and of curtesye  
Discrete ynow his contre for to gye  
Saue in som thynges that he was to blame  
And walter was thys yong lordys name

I blame hym thus that he considered not  
In tyme wyngyng what myght hym lette  
But on hys lust present was al his thought  
As for to huike and hunte on euery spede  
Wel nygh al other curis let he sette  
And eke he nolde e that was worst of al  
Wedde no wyf for aught that myght befall

Only that wynt his peple hurt so sore  
That flookels on a day they to hym went  
And one of hem that wysest was of hore  
Or elles that the lord wolde best assent  
That he shold telle hym what his peple ment  
Or elles coude he sturbe wel suche matere  
He to the markis sayd as ye shul here

O nobyl markis your humanityte  
Assurich be and prouff be hardynes  
As ofte as tyme is of necessityte  
That we to yow mow telle our hevynnes  
Accepteth now lord of your gentylnes  
That we with pyuous herte vnto you pleyne  
And lette your eris not my lordis disdaine

Al haue I not to doon in this matere  
More than a nother man hath in thys place  
Yet for as muche as ye my lord so dere  
Haue allway shewed me fauour and grace  
I dar the better aye of you a space  
Of audyence to shewe our requeste

## The clerkis Tale of Openford

And ye my lord to doo right as you lest

For certes lord so wel ys liketh you  
And al your werke & ever haue doon that we  
Ne coude not our self deuyseyn hold  
We myghte lyuyn in more felicitye  
Saue o thyng lord yf your wyl be  
That for to be a weddyd man you lest  
Thenne were your pepil in souereyn hertys rest

Wolbe ye your lord vnder the blissful poik  
Of souereynite and not of seruys  
Whiche that men clepyth spousayle or wedlok  
And thynkith lord among your wittis wyse  
Hold that our daies passen in sondry wyse  
For though we slepe or wake renne or ryde  
A yf slepyth the tyme it wol noman abyde

And though your grene youth flour as yet  
In crepyth age as styll as ony stoon  
And deth manasseth euery age and smyte  
In eek astat for there ne escapyth noon  
And also certeyn as we knolbe echon  
That we shul dye and buryen we alle  
Wen of the day when deth shal on us falle

Acceptith than of us the trewe entent  
That yet neuer refuseden your leste  
And we wol orde yf ye wol assent  
These you a wyf in short tyme atte leste  
Worn of the gentillest and of the beste  
Of al italye so that it oughte seme  
Honour to god and you as I can deme

Delouer us out of al thys lepy drede  
And take a wyf for high goddes sake  
For yf so be it befall as goddys forwode  
That thowold your deth your lyne shold flake

## The clerkes tale of Openford

And that a straunge successor shold take  
Your heritage o'bo lere be on lyue  
Wherefore he pray you hastily to ryue

Her make prayer and her pious chere  
Made the markis herte for to haue pyte  
Ye wol quod he myn olben peple dre  
To that I neuer erst thought conscreyne me  
I me reioysed in my lyberte  
That selde tyme is founde in mariage  
There I was fre I muste be in seruage

But netheles I see your trewe entente  
And truste vpon your wyf & haue doon ap  
Wherefore of my fre wyf I wyll assente  
To wedde me as sone as euer I may  
But there as ye haue profyd me to day  
To chuse me a wyf I wol be releas  
That choys I pray you of that profit see

For god it boote that chyldren ofte been  
Onlyke her worthye eldres hem befor  
Gounte cometh al of god not of the ston  
Of whiche they be gendrid and y' lere  
I truste in goddis bounte and therefore  
My mariage and myn estate and reue  
I hym betake he may doo as hym leste

Let me allone in chysyng of my wyf  
That charge vpon my lark y' wyll endure  
But I you pray & charge vpon your lyp  
That what wyf that I take ye assure  
To worship hir whyles her lyp may dure  
In word & werk both here and euery lere  
As she an emperours daughter were

And fethermore this shal ye swere that  
Agens my choys shal neuer grute he ne serue

## The clerkes Tale of Openford

For siþ I shal forgo my libertie  
At your request as euer mot I thryue  
There as my herte is set there wol I lyue  
And but ye wyll assente in such manere  
I pray you spekyth nomore of thys matere

Wiþ herty wyll they sworyn and assentyn  
To al this thyng there sayd not one wygyt nay  
Welskynz hym of graunce or that they wentyn  
That he wolde graunte he n a certeyn day  
Of his spouaile as sone as euer he may  
For yet alibey many of the peple dredde  
Lest the markys wolde no wyf wedde

He graunted hem a day such as hym lest  
On which he wolde he weddyd sikerly  
And sayd he dyd al this at hir request  
And they wyth humble entent humbly  
Knelynge bo on her knees ful reuerently  
Hym thanked alle & thus they haue an ende  
Of her entent and soon aghen they wende

And here vp on he toke his offyces  
And commaunded for the feste to purue  
And to his pryue knyghtes and squyers  
Such charge gaf as he lyst on hem leue  
And they to his commaundement obeye  
And eke of heri doth alle his dysgynce  
To do vnto that feste high reuerence

### prima pars Grisildis

**N**ought fer fro that paleys honourable  
There as this markys shoo his mariage  
There stode a thorp of sight ful delictable  
In which that our folk of that byllage  
Hadden her bestys and her byzage  
And of her labour toke her sustenance

## The clerkis tale of Orenford

After that the erthe gaf hem habundaunce

Among thysse pour folke ther dwellyd a man  
Whiche was 3 holde pourest of hem alle  
But hygh god somtyme sende can  
His grace in to a litel oxxys scalle  
Janpcola men of that thcolbye hym calle  
A doughter had he faye ynough to sight  
And Crisilde thys pong mayden hyght

But for to speke of vertuous beaute  
Than was she one the fayrest vnder sonne  
And ful poverly y fosterd. By was she  
No lecherous luse was thurgh her lerte y conne  
But of er of the welles than of the wyne tunne  
She dranke and for she wolde vertu please  
She lene be wel labour but none pole ese

But though this mayde so tendre were of age  
Yet in the breste of her byrgynyte  
There was enclosed tyme and sad courage  
And in grete reuerence and charityte  
Her olde pour fader fosterd she  
A felwe shep spynnyng on felde she kepte  
She wolde not be pole tyl she slepte

And when she homeward cam she wolde brynge  
Wortys or other arbys tymes ofte  
The which she shredde & setheth for hir luyng  
And made her bed hard & nothyng soft  
And ay she kepte her faders lyf on hofte  
Wyth eueriche obysaunce and dyspence  
That chylde myght doo to the faders reuerence

Now on Crisilde thys pour creature  
Ful ofte sithys this markys sette his eye  
As he wode on huntynge prauenture  
And when it befel that he myght her aspye

## The clerkis tale of Openford

He not wyth wanton lokyng of folwe  
His epen case on her but in sad wyse  
Wop on her chere he wolde hym ofte auyse

Commendyng in his herte her womanhode  
And eke her vertu passyng ony wyght  
Of so yong age as wel in chere as dede  
For though the peple had no grete insight  
In vertu he considered ful right  
Her counte & disposid hym that he wolde  
Wedde her only yf he euer wedde sholde

The day of weddyng cam but no wyght can  
Telle what maner woman hit shold be  
For whiche meruayl wondred many a man  
And sayd when they were in priuete  
Wol not our lord keue yet his knyght  
Wel he not wedde alas alas the whyle  
Why wol he thus hym self and so begyle

But netheles thys markys had do make  
Of gemmys sette in golde and in asure  
Broochys and ryngys for gracyous sake  
And of her clothynge took the mesure  
Of a mayde like unto hir stature  
And eke of her other ornaments alle  
That unto such a weddyng shold befall

The tyme of vndryng on the same day  
Approchyd that the weddyng shold be  
And al the palays put was in aray  
Both halle & chambrys eke in his degre  
Holbis of offys stuffyd wyth grete plente  
There mayst thou see of deynous vitaylle  
That may be founden as fer as lastyth itaylle

This rial markis richely arrayed  
Lordis and ladyes in his compaigny

## The clerkis tale of oxenford

The which that to the feste were prayd  
And of his retenu the lacherye  
Myth many a sowyn of sondry melodye  
Unto the bylage of which I tolde  
In thys aray the right wey haue holde

Grisylde of this godd boote ful innocent  
That for hir shapyn was al thys aray  
To sette water att the wellle is went  
And comyth hoom as sone as euer she may  
For wel sheherd sayd that ylike day  
That the markis shold wedde & yf she myghte  
She wolde fayne haue seyn somme of that sighte

She thoughte I wyl myth offer maydens stonde  
That been my felowes in our dore and see  
I fe markesse and therefore wyl I fonde  
To doon at hoom as sone as it may be  
The labour which that longeth to me  
And than I may at lesse be beholde  
Yf she this wey vnto the castel holde

And as she wolde ouer the threshold goon  
The markis cam and gan hir for to calle  
And she set down hir water pot anone  
Besides the threshold in on oyes scale  
And down vpon her knees she can to falle  
And with sad countenaunce knelid styll  
Tyl she had herd what was the lordys wylle

Thys thoughtful markis spak vnto the mayde  
Ful sobirly and sayd in thys manere  
Where is your fader o Grisildis & lande  
And she myth reuerence and humble chere  
Answerd lord he is al redy here  
And in she goth myth outen longer let  
And to the markis she her fader fet

## The clerkis tale of Openford

He by the hond than took this olde man  
And sayd thus when he had hym a spede  
Ganpaula I nether may ne can  
The plesaunce lenger of my herte hyde  
Yf that thou boucheauf that so betyde  
Thy doughter wyll I take or that I wende  
As to my wyf vnto her lyues ende

Thou kuest me I boote it wel certeyn  
And art my feythful liege man bore  
And al that liketh me I dar wel sayn  
It liketh the and specially therfore  
Tel me that point that I sayd before  
And yf thou wolt vnto that purpos draue  
To take me as for thy sone in salue

This sodeyn was thys man a stoned so  
That reed he wex afusshyd and al quakyng  
He stood vnnethe sayd he wordes mo  
But only thus lord quod he my wyllynge  
Ye as ye wyll ne agaynst your likynge  
I wol no thyng ye be my lord so dre  
Right as you list gouernyth thys matere

Yet wol I quod thys markis softly  
That in your chambre I & thou and she  
Haue a collacion and wotist thou why  
For I wyll aye yf it here wyll be  
To be my wyf and reule her after me  
And al thys shal be do in thy presence  
I nyl not speke out of thyng audyence

And in the chambr whyle they were aboute  
Her treses which as ye shal after here  
The peple cam in to the hous al wythoute  
And wondred hem in holl honest manere  
And so tentlyf kepte her fader dere  
But vterly grisilde wondre myghte

## The clerkes tale of openford

For neuer erst ne salw she suche a sighte

No wonder is though she were stoned  
To se so grette a gest come in that place  
She neuer was to no suche gestys y boned  
For whiche she lokid wyth ful pail face  
But shortly forth this mater for to chase  
These ten the wordis that the markis sayde  
To thys very kenyng feythful mayde

Grasild she sayd ye shul wel vnderstonde  
It liketh vnto your fader and vnto me  
That I you wedde and eke it may so stonde  
As I suppose that ye wyl that it so be  
But thys demaundis age I first quod she  
That sith it shal be doon in hysse wyse  
Wol ye assente or ellis you auise

I say thus be ye redy wyth good herke  
To al my lust and that I frely may  
As me best thynkith though ye salwe or smerke  
And neuer ye to gruteke myght ne day  
Whan I say ye that ye say not ones nay  
No her by word ne by frowning countenaunce  
Were thys and here I suere our assaunce

Wondryng vpon thise wordes quakyng for drede  
She sayd lord indigne and vnlworthy  
I am to suche honour as ye me fede  
But as ye wyl your self right so wyl I  
And here I swere that neuer wyllyngly  
In berke ne thought I nyl polb disobey  
For to be ded though me were both to dey

This is ynough Grasild myn quod she  
And forth she goth with a ful sobyr chere  
Out atte dore and after cam she  
And to the peple she sayd in thys manere

## The clerkis tale of Openford

This is my Wyf quod he that stondeth here  
Honourith her and loveth her I you praye  
Who so me loveth there is no more to saye

And for that no thyng of her olde gere  
She shold brynge in to his hous he kyd  
That women shold despoyse her there  
Of whiche thys ladies were not ful glady  
To handel her clothys where in she was clady  
But nethelès thys mayde bright of helpe  
Fro foot to hed they clothyd her al newe

Her kene they kempt that lay vntressyd  
Ful rudely & wyth her fyngrys smale  
A crolle on her hed they haue y dressyd  
And set hir ful of olives grete and smale  
Of her away what shold I make a tale  
Whanne the peple her knewe for her faynes  
Whan she translated was in such riches

This markis hath her spousid wyth a ryng  
Brought for the same cause & thenne her set  
Up on an hors snolwe white ful wel amblyng  
And to his paleys or he lenger let  
Wyth ioyful peple that her ladde and met  
Conuerdy her & thus the day they spende  
In reuel til the sonne gan descende

And shortly forth thys tale for to chace  
I say that to this newe Markefesse  
God hath such fauour sente of his grace  
That it ne semed by no siklynes  
That she was born & fedde in rudenes  
As in a cote or in an ovis stalle  
But norished in an emperours halle

To every wight she woen is so dere  
And worshipful that folke there she was bore

## The clerkis Tale of Openford

And from hir birthe knelwe her yett by yett  
Wonne the trolbedy they but durst haue stow  
This to Janyaul of which I spak before  
She doughar was for as by coniecture  
Them thought she was another creature

For though that euer vertuous was she  
She was encreased in such excellenc  
Of the wys good set in high counte  
And so discrete and feyr of eloquence  
So kempgne and so digne of reuerence  
And coude so the peple lertis en brace  
That eche her louyd that lokid in her face

Not only of Saluces in the town  
Publissid was the counte of her name  
But eke beside in many a regoun  
Yf one sayde wel another sayde the same  
So spredde of her hygh counte the fame  
That men & women both yonge and olde  
Gon to Saluces vpon her to beholde

Thus wolter solbly nay but ryally  
Weddyd with wyth fortunat honeste  
In goddis pees luyth ful honestly  
At hoome & outwarde grace ynough had he  
And for he saib that vnder solbe degre  
Was honest vertu hyd the peple hym helde  
A prudent man and that is seen ful selde

Not only this Cristide though hir wit  
Coude al the feet of wyfly humblynes  
But eke when that the cas requyred it  
The comune prouffyt coude she redresse  
There nas disorde rancour ne leynnesse  
In al the londe that she it coude a peas  
And wysly brynge hem in rest and eas

## The clerkis tale of Openford

Though her husbande were absent or none  
Of gentilmen or other of that contrie  
Were wroth she wolde brynge hem attone  
So wyse and ryte wordes had she  
And in iugement so grette equyte  
That she from heuyn sent was as men wend  
Peppel to saue and euery wrong to amende

Not long tyme after that this Grisilde  
Was weddyd she a doughter had y fore  
Al had her heyr fore a knaue chylde  
Glad was the markis and the folke therfore  
For though a mayde chylde cam al before  
She may into a knaue chylde attayne  
By liklyhede syn she nys not surpene

Explicit secunda Pars

Et sequitur Pars tercia

**H**er fill as it befallyth ofte tyme mo  
When that this chylde had solyde but a throlbe  
This markis in his herte longeth so  
To tempte his wyf her sadnes to knolbe  
That he ne myght out of his herte throlbe  
This meruayllous desire his wyf to assaye  
Nedeles god wote he thought her taffraye

He had assayed her ynough ofte tyme before  
And fond her euer good what nedeth it  
Her for to tempte and allway more and more  
Though sum man preysse it for a subtil wyf  
But as for me I say ful euyl it syt  
To assaye a wyf whan that it is no nede  
And put her in angursshe and in drede

For which this markis brought in this maner

## The clerkis Tale of Osenford

He cam allone a nyght there as he lay  
Wpþ serene face and right ogly chere  
And sayd thus Grisilde quod he that day  
That I you took fro your poure aray  
And put you in astate of hygh noblesse  
Ye haue not that forgotyn as I gesse

I say Grisilde the present dignyte  
In which I haue put you as I trowe  
Makyth you not forgetful for to be  
That I you took in poure astate ful bolue  
For ony weel ye must your self knolue  
Take hede of euery word what I seye  
There is no wyght that herith but we thre

Ye boot your self holu that ye cam hert  
In to this hous it is not longe ago  
And though to me ye be both leef and deere  
Unto my gentile ye be no thyng so  
They say to hem it is grete shame and wo  
For to be subiect and ten in seruage  
To he that born art in so smal a bylage

And namely sith thy daughter was ybore  
These wordes haue they spoken doubtles  
But I desire as I haue doon before  
To lyue my lyf wyth hem in rest and pces  
I may not in this caas be recheles  
I moot doon wyth thy daughter for the best  
Not as I wolde but as my peple best

And yet god boot this is ful both to me  
But netheles wythout your wityng  
I wyll not do but thus I wol quod he  
That ye to me assente as to thys thyng  
Shall nolv your patient in your werkyng  
That ye me hight and swoor in yone bylage  
That day that made was our mariage

## The clerkis tale of openford

Whan she had herd al thys she not ameydyd  
Neyther in word in chere ne in countenaunce  
For as it semyd she was not agreydyd  
She sayth lord al lieth in your plesaunce  
My chyld & I wyth hertely oþersaunce  
Ben your olben and ye may saue and spylle  
Your olben thyng do ye after your wyll

Ther may be no thyng so god my soule saue  
Likyng to you that may dysplese me  
Ne I desire no thyng in ony wyse to haue  
Ne drede for to lese saue only ye  
This wyll is in myn herte and ay shal be  
No lengthe of tyme or deth may thys deface  
Ne turne my corage to noon other place

Glad was this markis of her answeryng  
But yet it semed as he were not so  
Al drede was his chere and his lokyng  
Whan that he sholde out of the chambre go  
Sone after this a furlong wey or tibo  
He pryuelly hath tolde al his entent  
With a man and to his wyf hym sent

A maner of a seriaunt was this pryncy man  
The whiche that feythful often he founde had  
In thyngis grette and eke such folke wel can  
Done exauacion in thynges had  
The lord knelwe wel that he hym louyd & drad  
And when this seriaunt wyse his lordys wyll  
In to the chambyr he stalkyd hym ful styll

Madame he sayd ye moot forgeue it me  
Though I do thyng whiche I am conseynd  
Ye be ful wyse & ful wel knolwe ye  
That lordis lustis may not be fayned  
They may wel be felowshid and compleynd  
But men must nedo vnto her lust obeye

## The clerkis tale of Oxenford

And so wol I there is no more to seye

This chylde I am commaunded for to take  
And spak nomore but out the chylde he hent  
Dispitously and gan a chere to make  
As though he wolde haue sleyn it or he went  
Grisilde must al suffre andy corant  
Andy as a lambe she sytteth meke andy styll  
And lete thys cruel seriaunt do his wyll

Suspicious was the fame of thys man  
Suspect his face suspect his wordy also  
Suspect the tyme in whiche he thys began  
Alas her doughter that for houndy so  
She wende he wolde haue sleyn it tho  
But nethels she nether wepte ne sikid  
Confermyng her to that the markys likid

But at the last speke thenne she began  
And mekely she to the seriaunt prayde  
So as he was a very gentilman  
That she must her chylde kisse onys or it deyde  
Andy in her arme she the litil chylde leyde  
With ful sad face andy gan the chylde to blisse  
And kysyd it andy after gan it kisse

And thus she sayde in her benygne wyse  
Farewel my chylde I shal the neuer se  
But sith I haue the markyd byth the cros  
Of thykke fader blissed moot thou be  
That for so deyde vpon the cros of tre  
Thy soule litil chylde I hym betake  
For this nyght shalt thou dye for my sake

I trow that he a notice in this caas  
It had he hard this wolthe for to se  
Wel myght a moder thenne haue cryed alas  
But nethels so sad & stedfast was she

## The clerkis Tale of Openford

That she endurid al aduersite  
And to the seriaunt mekely she sayd  
Haue here agayn your litil yong mayde

Goth now quod she and doth my lordis leste  
But o thyng wyll I pray you of your grace  
But yf my lord forbidd you atte leste  
Burieth this litil body in som place  
That bestis ne foules it to rase  
But he to that purpos no worde wolde say  
But toke the chylde & wente vp on his way

This seriaunt cam to the lord agayn  
And of Gasildis wordes and her chere  
He tolde hym point by point short and pleyne  
And hym presentid with his daughter deere  
Sumwhat this lord had tolde in his manere  
But ne theles his purpos helde he styll  
As lordes doon when they wyll haue her wyll

And had his seriaunte that he pryuelly  
Sholde the chylde softely wynde and wrapp  
With al the circumstaunces tenderly  
And carye it in a coffre or in a lapp  
But on payne his hede of for to swappe  
That no man shold knowe of this entente  
He wold kepe it cam ne whyther that he wente

But at soleyne he to his suster deere  
That ylle tyme of payne was countesse  
He shold it take & helpe hir this matere  
Besekyng her to do her besynesse  
This chylde to foster in al gentillesse  
And whoos chylde that it is he had her hyde  
From euery wyght for aught that may betyde

The seriaunt goth & hath fulfilled thys thyng  
But to this markis now retorne we

## The clerkis tale of Orenford

For nold goth he ful faste ymagenyng  
Yf by his lypues chere he myght se  
Or by her worde aperceyue that she  
Were chunghyd but neuer coude he fynde  
But euer in one like sad and kynde

As glad as humblyl as besty in seruyse  
And eke in loue as she was wonte to be  
Was she to hym and in every maner wyse  
He of her doughter not oon word spak  
Non accident for non aduersite  
Was seyn in her ne neuer her doughter name  
He nempned she in ernest ne in game

Explicit Tercia pars  
Incipit pars Quarta

**I**n this astate there past be four yere  
Er she with child was but as god wolde  
A man chylde she bare by thys walter  
Ful gracious and fayr for to beholde  
And when that folk it to his fader tolde  
Not only he but al his contree mery  
Was for this child & god they thanke & lery

Whan it was twe yere olde and fro the breste  
Departyd fro his notice yp on day  
This markis caughte yet another lest  
To tempte his wyf yet ofter yf he may  
Unnedeles was she temptyd in assay  
But weddyd men ne can no mesure  
Whan that they fynde a pacient creature

Wyf quod this markis we haue herd or thys  
My peple berith heuy sikirly our mariage  
And namely syth my sone y born is  
Nold it is wors than euer in al our age  
The murmur fleth myn herte and my corage

## The clerkis Tale of Openford

For to myn eeres comyth the boys so smerte  
That it ful nygh destroyed hath myn herte

Nolw say they thus when walter is agoon  
Than shal the blood of janycula succede  
And be our lord for other haue we noon  
Suche wordes sayth my peple out of drede  
Wel oughte I of suche murmur take hede  
For certes I drede al suche sentence  
Thoug I they not pleye in myn audience

I wolde lye in weis yf that I myghte  
Wherefore I am disposed ful vterly  
As I hys suster scruped by nyght  
Right so thynke I to scize hym pryncely  
This warne I you that ye not sodenly  
Out of your self for no wo shold outtraye  
Be patient and therof I you praye

I haue quod she sayd thus & euer shal  
I wol no thyng in no maner certeyn  
But as you list no thyng greueth me at al  
Thoug that my doughter and my sone be slayn  
At your commaundement this is for to sayn  
I haue had no part of chylde ren tiben  
But first seeknes & after woo and peyn

Ye ben our lord doth with your owen thyng  
Right as you list ageth no rede of me  
For as I leste at hom al my clothynge  
When I cam first to you right so quod she  
Leste I my wyf and al my liberte  
And took your clothynge wherfor I you praye  
Doth your plesaunce I wyf your lust gley

And certes yf I had any prudence  
Your wyf to knowe or ye your lust me tolde  
I wolde it do wythoute negligence

## The clerkis tale of Openford

But now I boote your lust and what ye holde  
Al your plesaunce ferm and stabyl I holde  
For wyse I that my deeth myght do you ese  
Right gladly wolde I dye you to plesse

Deeth may not make no comparison  
Unto your hurte: & when this markis saw  
The constaunce of his wyf he cast a down  
His eyen tibo andy bondrid that she may  
In pacience suffer al this maner array  
And forth he goth with dreery countenaunce  
But to his herte it was ful grete plesaunce

This yngle seriaunt in the same wyse  
That her doughter caughte right so he  
Or wors yf men can wors deuyse  
Hath sent her sone that ful is of beaute  
Andy euer in one so patient was she  
That she no clere of heuyenes  
But first her sone & after gan hym bles

Save this she prayed hym yf that he myghte  
Her lityl sone he wolde in the erthe graue  
His tender lymes delicat in sighte  
Fro foules & fro bestys it to saue  
But she none other answer of hym myght haue  
He went his wey as he no thyng ne toughte  
But to holeyne he it tenderly broughte

This markis wondred euer longer the more  
Upon her pacience andy yf that he  
He had knowe sothly ther byfore  
That partly she children loved she  
He wolde haue wende that of som subtilte  
And of malice & for cruel courage  
That she had suffrid this wyth sad bysage

But weel he knewe that nexte hym self certeyn

## The clerkis tale of openford

She buydy her chyldren best in euery wyse  
But noli of wommen wolde I aye ful feyn  
Yf thys assayes myght not suffyse  
What coude a sturdy husbond more deuys  
To proue her wyfthod or her stedfastnes  
And he contynuyng euer in sturdynes

But there be folk of such condycion  
That whan they han a certeyn purpos take  
That can not seynte of her entencion  
But right as they were bounden to a stake  
They wyl not of her first purpos flake  
Right so this markis hath fully purposed  
To tempte his wyf as he was first dysposed

He wayted yf by word or countenaunce  
That she to hym was chaungyd of corage  
But neuer coude he fynde ony variaunce  
She was ay in one lette and in bysage  
And ay the fether that she was in age  
The more trewe yf it were possyble  
She was to hym in loue and more penyble

For which it semyd thus that of hem two  
There was but one wyl for but as walter leste  
The same lust was her plesaunce also  
And god bethankyd al fyl for the beste  
She sheld weel for non worldy breeste  
A wyf as of her self no thyng ne sholde  
Wylle in effect but as her husbond wolde

The sklauder of walter wonder wyde spradd  
That of cruel herte he ful wyckedly  
For he a poure woman weddyd hadde  
Hath murdered both his chyldren pruely  
Suche murmur was among hem comynly  
No wonder is for to the peple ere  
There cam no word but that they murdered were

## The clerkis tale of Openford

For whiche where as the peopl there before  
Had lued hym wel the sklaudre of his defame  
Made hem that hym they hated therefore  
To be a murderer is an hateful name  
But netheles for earnest ne for game  
He of his cruel purpos wolde not stynte  
To tempte his wyf was al his entente

Whan that his daughter yn yere was of age  
He m to the court of Rome m subtil wyse  
Enfourmed of his wyf sent his message  
Commaundynge hem such bullis to wyse  
As to his cruel purpos may suffyse  
Holt that the pope ludy as for his peyles rest  
That he sholde wedde another wyf yf he lest

I say he ludy they shold counterfete  
The popis bulis makynge menaon  
That he hath leue his first wyf for to lete  
As by the popes olven dispensacion  
To stynte the wraour andy discension  
Welbene his peple andy hym this said the bulle  
The whiche they haue publissed at fulle

The rude peopl as no wonder ne is  
Wende ful wel that it hady he right so  
But whan thys tidynge cam to Grisildis  
I deme that the herte of hir was ful wo  
But she y like sady was euermod  
Disposid was this humbyl creature  
The aduersite of fortune al to endure

Abydynge euer his lust andy his plesaunce  
To whom that she was geuen herte andy al  
As to his very worldy suffysaunce  
But shortly yf I this story telle shal  
This markis writen hath m special  
A letter m whiche he sheldyth his entent

## The clerkis tale of Openford.

And secretly to Wolseyne he hath it sent

To the erle of paunce whiche had the  
Weddyd his suster/prayed hym specialy  
To brynge hom ayeen his chyldren two  
In honourable state al openly  
But o thynge he hym prayde vterly  
That he no wyght though they dyd enquire  
Shold not telle whos chyldren that they were

But say the mayde shal weddyd be  
Unto the markis of Saluces anon  
And as this erle was prayed so dyd he  
For at the day set he on his weye is goon  
Tolward Saluces and lordes many oon  
In rich array this mayde for to gyde  
Her yonge brother rydng by her syde

Arayed was tolward her mariage  
This fressh mayde ful of gemmys clere  
Her brother whiche in yere was of age  
Arayed ful fressh in his manere  
And thus in grete noblesse and glady chere  
Tolward Saluces spedng her journey  
Fro day to day they ryden in her weye

Explicit Quarta pars

Incipit pars Quinta

**W**mong al this after the wicked usage  
This markis is yet about to tēpe more  
The vtterest preef of her corage  
Fully to haue experieuce and lore  
Yf she were as stedfast as before  
He on a day in open audyence  
Ful boistously hath sayd here this sentence

## The clerkis Tale of Openford

Certes grisilde I had y nold of pleasaunce  
To haue you to my wyf for your goodnes  
As for your trouth and your oþysaunce  
Not for your lynnage ne for your riches  
But nold knowe I in very sothfastnes  
That in grete lordshyp ys I wyl alyse  
There is grete seruytude in sondry wyse

I may not do as euery plesbman may  
My peple conscreyeth me for to take  
Another wyf and cryen day by day  
And eke the pope / rancour for to slake  
Concantlyt it that dar I vndertake  
And trewly thus muche I wol you say  
My nelyf is comyng by the way

We strong of herte and wyde anon her place  
And that dolber that ye broughte to me  
Takith it aghen I prue you leue of my grace  
Retourneth to your faders hous quod she  
No man may allway haue prosperite  
Wyth euen herte I rede you to endure  
The strouk of fortune or of auenture

And she agayn answered in patience  
My lord quod she I wote and wyfte allway  
Dow that felbyven your magnificence  
And my pouerte no wyght can ne may  
Make ouy comparison it is no way  
I ne helde me neuer digne in no manere  
To be your wyf / no ne your chamberere

And in this hous there ye me lady made  
The hygh god take I for wythnes  
And also wyfely be my soule glade  
I neuer helde me lady ne maystres  
But humble seruaunt to your worthynes  
And euer shal wyfely that my lif may dure

## The clerkis tale of Oxenford

A thouen euery worldly creature

That ye haue so longe of your keryngnyte  
H: me in hygh honour and noble  
Wher as I was not worthy for to be  
That thanke I god and you to whom I prey  
Forgelde it you ther is no more to sey  
Unto my fader gladly wol I wende  
And with hym dwelle to my lyues ende

There I was fosterid of a chylde ful smalle  
Tyl I be ded my lyf there wol I lede  
A wyddow clene in body herte and alle  
For sith I gaf to you my maydenshede  
I am your trewe wyf it is no drede  
God shulde such a brida wyf to take  
Another man to husbond or to make

And of your nelwe wyf god of his grace  
So graunte you wele and prosperite  
For I wol gladly yelde her my place  
In which I was blessful wont to be  
For sith it liketh you my lord quod she  
That som tyme were al my hertes wste  
That I shal goon I wol goon whan ye lesse

But there as ye me profre such dowaye  
As I first brought it is wel in my mynde  
It were my wretchyd clothys no thyng fayr  
The which to me now were hard to fynde  
O good god hold gentyl & hold kynde  
Ye semed by your speche and your visage  
The day that maketh was our maypage

But soth is sayd alway I fynde it trewe  
For in effect y preyed it is on me  
Loue is not olde as whan it is nelwe  
But certis lord for non aduersite

## The clerkistale of openford

To dyen in thys case it shal not be  
That euer in worde or werk I shal repene  
That I you geue my herte in hool entente

My lord ye boote that in my faders place  
Ye dyd me stripe out of my pour bedde  
And richly ye me clad of your grace  
To you brought I nought ellys out of drede  
But feyth nakydnes and my maydenshede  
And here agen my clothyng I restore  
And eke my weddyng ryng for euer more

The remenaunt of your ielvelles redy they be  
With yune your chambrer I dar it safely seyn  
Nakyd out of my faders hous quod she  
I cam and naked must I turne ageyn  
Al your plesur ne folow I holde I seyn  
But yet I hope it be not your entente  
That I smokles out of your paleys wente

Ye coude not do so dysshonest a thyng  
That yllke wombe in whiche your chyldren lay  
Shold before the peple in my walkyng  
We seyn al here wherfore I you pray  
Let me not like a borne goo by the way  
Remembre you myn olde lord so dere  
I was your wyf though I vnworthy were

Wherfore in guerdon of my maydenshede  
Whiche that I broughte & not agen here  
As touchsauf as geue me to my mede  
But such a smok as I was wont to were  
That I therbyth may lye the wombe of fere  
That was your wyf & here I take my leue  
Of you myn olde lord lest I you geue

The smok quod he that thou haste vpon thy back  
Let it be seple & here it forth byth the

## The clerkis tale of Openford

But wel vnnethe that worde he spak  
But wente his wey for wouth and pyte  
By fore the folke her self strypped hath she  
And in her smok wyth foot and her al sure  
Tolward her faders hous is she fare

The folke her folowyn wepyng in her wey  
And fortune euer they cursid as they goon  
But she fro wepyng kepte her eyen dreye  
Ne in thys tyme word spak she non  
Her fader that thys tidynge herde anon  
Cursyd the day and the tyme that nature  
Shoop hym to be a lups creature

For out of doute thys olde poure man  
Was euer suspect of her mariage  
For euer he demed sith it began  
That whan the lord had fulfilled his corage  
He wold thynke it were a dysparage  
To his astate so bolde for to light  
And wyden her as sone as euer he myght

Apense his daughter hastily goth he  
For he by noyse of folke knelbe her comyng  
And wyth her olde cotte as it myght be  
He keueryd hir ful sorowfully wepyng  
But on her body myght he it not brynge  
For rude was the cloth and six more of ag  
By dayes fele than was her mariage

Than wyth her fader for a certeyn space  
Duellyd this flour of wyfly patience  
That neuer by her worde ne by her face  
Weforn the folke ne in her absence  
Ne shewedy she that her was doon offence  
Ne of her hygh astate no remembraunce  
He had he as by ony maner countenaunce

## The clerkistale of openford

No wonder was for in her grete astate  
Her ghoost was euer in pleygh humylyte  
No tender mouth ne herte delicate  
No pompe ne semblaunce of rialte  
But ful of pacient benygnyte  
Discrete and prudeles and ay honourabyl  
And ay to her husbondy meke and stabyl

Men speke of Job and most for his humbles  
As clerkis. Whan hem list an iber endyte  
Namely of men but in sothfastnes  
Though clerkis preysse women but a litte  
Ther can no man in humbles hem acquyte  
As woman can ne can be half so trewe  
As women ben but it be falle of nelwe

Epylat Quinta pars

Inapit pars Sexta

**N**O soleyh is this erke of payre come  
Of which þe same spröðg both more & lesse  
And in the poppis ceetes al and somme  
Was tolde how that he a nelwe markesse  
With hym broughde in such pompe and riches  
That neuer was there seen wyth mannes ey  
So noble arraye in al west lumbardy

The markis whiche that schoop & knelwe al thys  
Or that this erke was come sent his message  
For that sely poure creature Ensilidis  
And she wyth humble herte & glad visage  
Not with no swellyng thought in her conage  
Cam at his heste and on her knees her set  
And reuerently and wysely she hym greet

Gastode quod he my wyf is ful vterly  
This mayden that weddyd shal be to me

## The clerkis tale of Openford

Receyued he to morowe al so ryally  
As it is possible in myn hous to be  
And eke that euery wyght in his degre  
Haue his astat in sittynge and in scrupse  
And hye plesaunce as ye can best deuyse

I haue no woman suffysaunt certeyn  
The chambrys for to araye in ordenaunce  
A fair my list and therefore wolde I sayne  
That thyn were al such maner of gouernaunce  
Thou knowest eke of olde al my plesaunce  
Though thyn aray be bad and euyl be seyn  
Do thy deuoyr yet at the leste weyn

Not only lord that I am glady quod she  
To do your lust but I desire also  
You first to plesse and serue in my degre  
Wythoute fayntynge and shal euer mo  
Ne neuer for no wheel ne for no wo  
Ne shal the ghoost wythyn my herte stynte  
To loue you best wyth al my trelbe entente

And with that worde she ga the hous to dighte  
And tablis for to sette and beddis for to make  
And peyned her to do al that she myghte  
Prayng the chamberers for goddis sake  
To haste hem and fast swepe and shake  
And she the most scrupulys of alle  
Hath euery chambrer arayed and his halle

Aboute the vndryn gan this erle to sighte  
That with hym brought thise nobil childre they  
For which the peple ran to se that sight  
Of her aray richely they were be seyn  
And than atte erse among hem they seyn  
That walter was no fool though that hym lest  
To chaunge his wyf for it was for the best

## The clerkis Tale of Oopenford

For she is fayrer as they dempny alle  
Than is Grisilde and more tender of age  
And fayrer frucht betwene hem shal falle  
And more plesaunte for her hygh lynage  
Her brothyr eke so fayr was of bysage  
That hem to se the pepyl knyth caught plesaunce  
Comendynge nold the markis gouernaunce

O stormy pepyl euer vrsady and vntrelve  
A vndiscrete and chaungynge as a vane  
Delityng euer in romel that is nelve  
For like the mone ay waxe yondre wane  
A ful of clappynge were ynowe a jane  
Pour dome is fals pour constaunce eue prupt  
A ful grette fool is he that on you lupt

Thus sayden sady folke in that cite  
When that the pepyl garp vpon and down  
For they were glady right for the nelve  
To haue a nelve lady of her toun  
Nomore of this nold make I menaon  
But to Grisilde agayn I wyl me dresse  
And telle her constaunce and her besynesse

Ful besy was Grisilde in euery thyng  
That to the feste was tho appertynent  
Right nought was she abasshyd of her clothynge  
Though it were rude & somdele eke to rent  
But with glady chere to the pite is went  
With other folke to grette the markises  
And after that doth forth her besynes

With right glady chere she his gestis receyued  
And so connyngly eke in his degre  
That no default no man perceyued  
But as they wondrid what she myght be  
That in so pour array was for to se  
And coude such honour and reuerence

## The clerkis tale of Orenford

And worthely they preysen her prudence

In al this mene whyle she ne stent  
This mayde & eke her brother to comende  
With al her herte in ful benygne entent  
So wel that no man coude her prys amende  
But atte last when that lordys wende  
To sitten down to mete he gan to calle  
Grisilde as she was besy in the halle

Grisilde quod he as it were in his pley  
Holt liketh the my wyf & her beaute  
Right wel my lord quod she for in good fey  
A fayrer salbe I neuer none than is she  
I pray to god yeue her good prosperite  
And so hope I he wyll to you sende  
Plesaunce ynolb vnto your lyues ende

O thyng I beseech you and warne also  
That ye not prick with no turmentye  
This tender mayde as ye haue do moo  
For she is fosterid in her norissyng  
More tenderly and to my supposyng  
She coude not aduersite wel endure  
As coude a poure fosterid creature

And when this walter salbe her patience  
Her glad chere and no malice at al  
And he so ofte had do to her offence  
And she ay constant & sad as a wal  
Contynuyng euer her innocence ouer al  
This sturdy markis gan his herte dresse  
To telbe vpon her wyfly stedfastnes

This is ynolb grisilde myn quod he  
Be nolb no more agast ne euyl apayd  
I haue thy feyth & thy benygnyte  
As wel as euer woman was asayd

## The clerkis tale of Openford

In greet astat or pouerly arrayd  
Now knowe I dre wyf thy stedfastnes  
And her in armys toke and gan her kysse

And she for wonder toke of it no kepe  
She herd not what thyng he to her sayde  
She ferde as she had stert out of her slepe  
Tyl she out of her masidnes abreyde  
Gasilde quod he by god that for vs deye  
Thou art my wyf ne none other I haue  
Ne neuer had as god my soule saue

This is thy doughter which thou hast supposid  
To be my wyf that other feythfully  
Shal be myn heyr as I haue purposed  
Thou hure hym in thy body treibly  
At holeyne haue I kepte hem pruely  
Take hem ayen for now mayst thou not se  
That thou hast born none of thy chyl dren they

And folk that othprlyse haue sayde by me  
I warne hem wel that I haue doon this dede  
For no malice ne for no cruelte  
But for to assay in the thy womanshede  
And not to sle my chyl dren god forbede  
But for to kepe hem pruely and styll  
Til I thy purpos knowe and al thy wille

When she this herde in swounyng down she fallith  
For pitous ioye and after her swounyng  
She to bothe her yong chyl dren callith  
And in her armys ful pytously wepyng  
Embraced hem & tenderly kysse  
Ful like a moder with her salt teis  
She badith both her bisage & her heis

O which a pytous thyng it was to see  
Her swounyng & her pitous toyes to here

## The clerkis tale of Oxenford

Graunt mercy lord? god thanke it you qd? she  
That ye haue saued? me my chyldren dre  
Nolb recke I neuyr to be ded? euyh here  
With y stonde in your loue and in your grace  
No doubt? of deth ne lshyn my spirit pace

O tender o dre o yonge chyldren myn  
Your woful moder wende ful stedfastly  
That cruel houndys or som foule vermy  
Had? etyn you but god of his mercy  
And? your kengyn? vader so tenderly  
Hath done you kepe and? in that same stounde  
Al sodenly she swapt down to grounde

And in her sboune so sadly holdyth she  
Her children also lshyn she gan hem tembrace  
That with grete sleyght and? grete dyffpaulce  
The chyldren from her arme gan they arace  
O many a tere on many a pytous face  
Down ran of hem that stoden there besyd  
Connethe aboute her myght they abyde

Walter her gladyth and? her sorow flakyth  
She risith vp and? abasshyd? from her traunce  
And? euery wyght her joye and? feste makyth  
Tyl she hath caught agayn her countenaunce  
Walter doth her so feythfully plesauce  
That it was deynce for to sen the chere  
Betwene hem also nolb they be met in fere

Thyse ladies lshyn they her tyme say  
Haue takyn her and? in to chambyr anon  
And? stripen her out of her rude aray  
And in a cloth of gold? that bryght shoon  
With a cowlne of many a rich stoon  
Op on her hed they in to the halle her brought  
And there she was honoured? as her ought

## The clerkis tale of Openford

Thus hath this pytous day a blissful ende  
For every man and womman doth his myght  
This day in myrthe and reuel to spende  
Eyl on the welkyn shoon the sterres light  
For more solempnyte in every mannys sight  
This feste was and of gretter costage  
Than was the reuel of her mariage

Ful many a yere in high prosperite  
Euen thise ilke in concord and in rest  
And richely his daughter marriede he  
Unto a lord one of the worthiest  
Of al itayl & than in pces and rest  
His wyfys fader in his court he keepeth  
Eyl the soule out of the body creepeth

His sone succeedyth in his heritage  
In rest and pces after his faders day  
And fortunat was eke in mariage  
Al put he not his wyf in gret assay  
This world is not so stronge it is no nay  
As it hath ben in olde tymes yore  
And herkith what this auctor sayth therfore

This story is sayd not for that wyfys sholde  
Folow Grisilde as in high humylyte  
For it were importable though they wolde  
But for that every wyght in his degre  
Shold be constant in al aduersite  
As was grisilde wherfore petrark writeth  
This story whiche with high style he endyteth

For sith a woman was so patient  
Unto a mortal man wel more we ougher  
Receyuen al in good that god bes sent  
For gret skyl is he preue that he wrought  
But he ne tempteth no man that he bought  
As sayth saynt Jame of his pytyl rede

## The clerkis tale of Oxenford

He prauyth fold but a day it is no drede

And suffritþ be as for our exercaise  
With sharpe scorgis and aduersite  
Ful ofte to be bete in sondry wyse  
Not for to knowe our wyll but certes be  
Ee we were born knowe al our frelde  
And for our beste is al his gouernaunce  
Let be lyue than in vertuous suffraunce

But o wordþ harkenþþ herdþnges or j goo  
It were ful harde to fynde noli a dayes  
Ensilwes in al a contre thre or fiv  
For yf they were put to such assayes  
The gold of hem hath so lode alayes  
Wyth bras for though it be faye at eye  
It woldþ rather bras on fiv than plye

For which here for the wyrys soue of lutho  
Whos luf and secte myghty god maynane  
In hygh maistery or ellys were it scathe  
I wyl wyth lufy herte fressh and grene  
Say you a songe to glad you j bene  
And let be seynt of earnest matere  
Harkenþþ my song that sayth in this manere

Lenuoye de Chaucer a  
les marietz de nre temps

**G**risilde is ded and eke her pacience  
And both at onys buried in j tiple  
For which j am in open audience  
No weddyd man so hardy be to assaye  
His wyrys pacience in trust to fynde  
Grisildis / for in certeyn he shal fayne

O nobyl wyrys ful of hygh prudence  
Eet non humylite pour tungis naye  
Ne lette no clerke haue cause or diligence

## The clerkis tale of Openford

To write of you a story of such meruayle  
As of Gaius patient and kynde  
Rest cheuache you swabill in her entayle

Folowith ecco that holdyth no salence  
Wit euer ansyberng at countertayle  
Be not a diffid for your innocence  
But sharply take on you the gouernayle  
Enprentith wel that lesson in your mynde  
For comyn profyt seyth it may auayle

Ye archelbyups stondyth at defence  
Syn ye be stronge as is a grete Camaylle  
Ne suffer not that men do you offence  
But skender byups as febyl in bataylle  
Weth egre as a tigre is for mynde  
As clappynge as a mylle & you counsayle

Ne dredeyth hem not do hem no reuerence  
For though thy husbond armyd be in mayle  
Thy awolues of thy crabbod ebaquene  
Shal perse his breste and eke his aueynayle  
In Iehoue I rede ek that thou hym blynde  
And thou shalt make hym colbecke as a quayle

If thou be fayr there folk ben in presence  
Skelb thou thy bysage and thy apparayle  
If thou be foul be fre of thy despenys  
To gete the frendis ag do thy trauaylle  
Be ag of chere as light as leef on lynde  
And leet hym care wepe byryngs and wayle

Hete endyth the tale of the clerke of Openford

Verba hospitis /

**T**his worthy clerk whā endid was his tale  
Our host sayde & swere by cockis sonys  
Me were leuer than a barrel of ale  
My wyf at home had serde this legende onys

## The Prologue

This is a gentyl tale for the nonys  
As to my purpos wyse ye my wyse  
But thynge that wyse not be let it be seyl

Here enden the wordes of the host

Here begynneth the second nonnyes prologue

**T**he mynystre and norisse Unto byas  
Which that men clepe in englysh ydelnesse  
Which that is portre of þe pite of delices  
To eschuen and by hys contrary hem to oppresse  
That is to sayn by leefful besynes  
Wel ought we to don al our entent  
Lest that the fende wyth ydelnes be sent

For he wyth his thousand cordis slepe  
Contynually be wayteth to be clappe  
Whan he may man in ydelnes aspre  
He can so lightly catch hym in his trape  
Tyl that a man be sent right by the lappe  
He nys not waar the fende hath hym in hond  
Wel oughte be werke & ydelnes wythstond

And though men drede neuer for to dye  
Yet se men wel by reson doutles  
That ydelnesse is rotyn slogardye  
Of whiche ther comyth neuer no good entrees  
And see that skugthe he holdeth in a lece  
Only for to slepe and eie and drynke  
And to deuouryn al that othyr swynke

And for to put be from such ydelnes  
That cause is of so grete confusyon  
I hane here doon my feythful besynes  
After the legend and translatioun  
Right so thy glorious lyf and passyon

## The Prologue

Thou with thy garland wrought of rose of alpe  
The mene I mayde & martir saynt Cecily

And thou that flour art of Virgynys alle  
Of whom that Bernardi list so wel to write  
To the at my first begynnynge I calle  
Thou comfort of be wretchys do me endyte  
Thy maydens deth that way thou her merite  
The eternal lyf and of the fend Spectorye  
As men mow after rede in her story

Thou mayde and moder doughter : f thy sone  
Thou well of mercy sensual soules to cure  
In whom that god of bounte dwells for to dwone  
Thou humble & high ouer every creature  
Thou nobil so ferforth ouer nature  
That no disdeigne thy maker had of kynde  
His sone in blood & flesch to clothe & wynde

Whiche in the cloyster of thy chaste spede  
Toke manys shap the eterne soue and yee  
That of thy tryne compass lord and gyde is  
Whom heuen & erthe and see without les  
As serien and thou Virgynne wemles  
Ware of thy body and dueldist mayde pure  
The creatour of every creature

Assembled is in the magnificence  
With mercy goodnes and wyth such pyte  
That thou that art the souyn of excellen  
Not only helpe them that prayeth the  
But oftyn tyme of thy benygnte  
But frely or that man thy helpe seeke  
Thou gost before and art our soules kee

Nob helpe thou blessid and make fayr mayde  
Me flempe wretch in this desert of alle  
Thynk on the woman of canane that sayde

## The Prologue

That whelpps eten som of the crowys smalle  
That from her lordes table ben y falle  
And though that I vnworthy sone of Eue  
Be synful yet accepte my beleue

And for that feyth is dede wythout werkis  
So for to werken geue me wyt and space  
That I be quyt from thens that most dera is  
O thou that art so fayr and ful of grace  
Be myn aduocate in that hygh place  
There as wythouten ende is sunge O sanne  
Thou caryes moder doughter dore of anne

And of thy light my soule in prison lycht  
That troublid is by the cogytacion  
Of my body and also by the wyght  
Of erthly lust and fals affection  
O haupn of refut o saluacion  
Of hem that ben in sorow and distresse  
Nolde helpe for to my worke I wol me dresse

Yet I pray you that redyn that I write  
For geue me that I doo no diligence  
This plike story kepyl to endyte  
For both haue I the wordes and the sentence  
Of hym that atte seyntis reuerence  
The story wrote and folowedy for legende  
And pray you that ye wil my werke amende

First wolde I you the name of seynt Cecyl  
Expoune as men may in her story see  
It is to say in englyssh xuennys alpe  
For pure chasenes of virgynyte  
Or for sike wyhtnes had of honeste  
And grene of conaunce and of good fame  
The swete sauour alpe was her name

Or Cecyl is to say the way to hpynde

## The Prologue

For the ensaumpyl was by good trechynge  
Or elles caly as I writyn fynde  
As ioyned by a maner conioynynge  
Of heuyn and lya m her in figurynge  
The heuyn is set for thought of h lynes  
And lya for her lastynge besynes

Caly may eke be sayde in thys manere  
Wantynge of blyndnes for her grete light  
Of sappenæ and for her thewis clere  
Or ellis to thys maydens name bright  
Of heuyn and leos comyth of which by right  
Men myght her wel the heuyn of pepyl calle  
Ensaumpyl of good and wyse werkis alle

For leos peple in englyssh is for to say  
And right as men may in the heuyn se  
The sonne and mone and sterris eury way  
Right so men ghoostly in this mayden tre  
Salbyn of feryth the grete magnanymte  
And eke the clernes hool of sappenæ  
And sondry werkis bright of excellenæ

And right so as thys phylsophis wrote  
That heuyn is slyft & round & eke brennyng  
Right so was sayd Caly the whyte  
Ful slyft and lesy in eury good werkyng  
And round & hool in good persuerynge  
And brennyng euer in charite ful bright  
Now haue I declared you what she hight

Here endyth the second  
Nonnes prologue

## The Tale of the Nunne



And here beynneth the Tale

**T**his mayde bright as the leafe saith  
Was comen of romayns & of nobil kynde  
And from her auntyl by fosteryn in the faith  
Of Criste and here his gospel in her mynde  
She neuer seide as I wyrtten fynde  
Of her prayer & god to loue and drede  
Besekynge hym to kepe her maydenhede

And when this mayde shold bynto a man  
By weddyng be that was ful of yowthe age  
Whiche that y clepyd was Bakeryan  
And day was come of her marriage  
She ful deuoute & humblyl in her corage  
Under her robe of golde that sat ful fentre  
And next her flesch y clady her in an hys

## The Tale of the Nonne

Ande wythe that the organs made melodye  
To god; aboue thus in her herte songe she  
O lord; my body ande eke my soule geue  
Vnto hemmyd; lest I confounded; be  
Ande for his loue that depde vp on the tre  
Euery second; ande thridde day she faste  
A; byddynge in her orisons ful faste

The nyght cam e to bedde must she geon  
Wyth her husbond; as it was the manere  
Ande pryncely she sayde to hym anon  
O swete ande welbekouyd; spouse dere  
Ther is a cuncyl ande ye wyll it heere  
Whiche that night sayn I wolde to you seyn  
So that ye swete ye wyll it not selwyn

Waleryan gan faste to her swete  
That for no was ne thyng; that myght be  
He shold; neuer to none selwyn; her  
Ande than at erst to hym sayde she  
I haue an aungel whiche that couyth me  
That wyth grete loue I her so I wake or slepe  
Is redy ay my body for to kepe

Ande yf that he may felen out of drede  
That ye me touche or loue in bysony  
He right anon wyll se you wyth the dede  
Ande in your pouth thus shal ye dre  
Ande yf that ye in clene lye me geue  
He wyll you loue as me for your clennes  
Ande shewe to you his Joy ande his fryghtnes

This Valerian correcte; as god; wolde  
Answerd; agayn yf I shal truste the  
Let me that aungel se ande hym beholde  
Ande yf that it a true aungel be  
Then wyll I do as thou hast prayd; me  
Ande yf thou loue another man for soth

## The Tale of the Nonne

Right with this werde than wyl I se you both

Cealy answered anon right in this wyse  
If that you list the aungel shul ye se  
So that ye trolbe on crist and; you baptyse  
Goth forth to Via appia quod; she  
That from this toun ne stondith but myles thre  
And; to the poor folkys that there duellyn  
Sey hem right as that I shal you tellyn

Tel hem that I Cealy you to hem sent  
To shewyn you good; Urban the olde  
For secret nedes and; for good; entent  
And whan that ye saynt Urban haue beholde  
Telle hym the wordis that I to you tolde  
And whan that he hath purgyd you from synne  
Than shal ye se the aungel or he tlyvynne

This Valerian is in to the place goon  
And right as he was taught by her lernynge  
He fond; this holy man Urban anon  
Among the sayntes kerels woltyng  
And he anon wythouten taryng  
Dyd; his message & whan that he it tolde  
Urban for ioye gan his hondys up holde

The teris from his eyen let he falle  
Almyghty lord; O Ihesu crist quod; he  
Solber of chaste counceyll hierde of vs alle  
The fruyt of that seed; of chastyte  
That thou hast solbe in Cealy take to the  
Lo like a besy bee wythouten gyle  
The serueth as thyng olven thral Ceale

For that spouse that she took but nelbe  
Ful like a fers byoun she sendyth here  
As make as euer was ony lambe to elbe  
And wyth that worde anon there gan appere

## The Tale of the Nonne

An olde man cladd in whyte clothys clewe  
That had a booke with letter of gold in honde  
And gan before Valerian for to stonde

Valerian as dede syl deun for drede  
When he this olde man salbe standyng so  
Whiche forthwyth anon he herd hym rede  
O worde of alle o feyth o god wythouten mo  
O cristendom and fader of al also  
Alouyn al and ouer al euery wyse  
Thyse wordes al wyth golde writen were

When this was rede than sayde this olde man  
Leuyst thou this thyng or no say y or nay  
I leue al thyng quod Valerian  
For sother thyng than thys I dar wel say  
Wnder heuyn no wyght thynke may  
Tho kanyssed this olde man he ne wyse wyse  
And pope vrbain hym cristenyd right there

Valerian goth hom and fyndeth caly  
Wythyn he ch unhyt with an aungel stonde  
This aungel had of asis and of lyp  
Crownyngs tbo the whiche he hure in honde  
And first to Caly as I vnderstond  
He gaf that one and after gan he take  
That other to Valerian he make

With body clene and vnbenympt thought  
Keepey ap wel thes crownyngs quod he  
I fro paradys to you hem haue I brought  
Ne neuer mo shal they cotyn be  
Ne lese he swete sauour trusty me  
Ne neuer wyght ne shal se hem wyth ey  
But he be chaste and hate vglyng

And thou Valerian for thou so soone  
Assentyse to goddis counceyl also

## The Tale of the Nonne

Say Isha. thou list & thou shalt haue thy lone  
I haue a brother quod Valerian tho  
That in this worlde I loue noman so  
I pray you that my brother may haue grace  
To knowe the trowthe as I do in this place

The aungel sayde godd lyketh thy request  
And bothe wyth the palme of martirdome  
Ye shul come in to his blissful feeste  
And with that worde Tiburce his brother com  
And when that he the sauour vndernom  
Whiche that Rosis and the Alyes caste  
Within his herte he gan to wonder faste

And sayde I wonder this tyme of the yere  
Whens that this swete sauour comyth so  
Of rosis and of Alyes that I smelle here  
For though I had hem in my bondis tibo  
The sauour myght in me no deper goo  
The swete smelle that in my herte I fynde  
Hath chaungyd me al in another kynde

Valerian sayde tibo crownyd haue we  
Snowe whyt & rose reed that shyneth clere  
Whiche that thyn eyen haue no myght to see  
And as thou smellyst thorough my prayer  
So shalt thou se hem leue brother dere  
If it se be thou wythouten sboute  
Beleue a right & knowe very trowthe

Tiburce answerde sayst thou this to me  
In sothnes or in dreame I herkyn this  
In dreame quod Valerian haue we be  
Vnto this tyme brother myn pllys  
But now at erst our duekynng in trowthe is  
How dost thou this qd Tiburce & in what wyse  
Quod Valerian that shal I the deuse

## The Tale of the Monne

The aungel of god hath me the trouth I taught  
Whiche thou shalt see yf thou wilt reue  
The ydolys ande be clene ande ellys nought  
And of the myracle of thys crounys ellys  
Seynt ambrose in his prelas list for to sepe  
Solempnly this nobil doctour dre  
Comendyth it ande sayth in this manere

The palme of martirdom for to reape  
Seynt Ceale fulfilled of goddys grace  
The world & eke her chambyr gan she wepe  
Witnes Ceale ande Tiburtes shryfte  
To whiche god of his counte wolde shryfte  
Crownys ellys of flours swete smellynge  
And made his aungel hem the crownys brynge

The mayde hath brought hem to his aboue  
The world hath wist that it is worthy certeyn  
Deuocion ande chastyte wel for to loue  
Tho shewde hym ceale al open ande pleyne  
That alle ydols ben but a thyng in weye  
For they be dome ande thereto they be deef  
And chargid hym his ydolis for to lef

Who so that twelveth not this a best he is  
Quod the Tiburte yf I shal not be  
And she gan kisse his best that herde this  
And was ful gladd he couthe trouth aspre  
This day I take the for myn alpe  
Sayde this blissyd fayr mayden dere  
Ande after that she sayde as ye molde here

So right so as the sonne of crist quod she  
Made me thy brotheris wyf right in this wyse  
Anon for myn alpe here take I the  
Syn that thou wilt thy ydols dyspse  
So with thy brother nolv & the baptise  
And make the clene so that thou may beholde

## The Tale of the Nonne

That aungels face which thy brother of tolde

Tiburce answerde and sayde brother deere  
First tel me whither I shal & to what man  
To whom god he come forth with right good chere  
I wyl the lede into the popes Brian  
To Brian brother myn Galenian  
Quod the Tiburce wolt thou me thyder lede  
Me thynketh that it were a wonder drede

Ne mene ye not Brian quod he the  
That is so ofte dampned to be drede  
And woneth in halleis all day to and fro  
And dar not onys put forth his fere  
Men shold hym brenne in a fyre so reed  
Yf he were founde yf men myght hym aspre  
And we also to bere hym companye

And whyle we sekyn that dysynge  
That is hyd in heuene pryuely  
Algate brent in this worlde shal we be  
To whom Cealy answerde boldely  
Men myght drede lye and skilfully  
This lyf to lose myn olde deere brother  
Yf this were spyunge only & none other

But there is better lyf in other place  
That neuer shal be lost ne drede the nought  
Which goddes sone he tolde thowld his grace  
That faderis sone hath al thyng wrought  
And al that wrought is with a skilful thought  
The ghoost that from the fader gan pwarde  
Hath sould hym withouten ony drede

By worde and by myracle he goddes sone  
Whan he was in this worlde declarid here  
That there is other lyf there men may wone  
To whom answerde Tiburce o sustere deere

## The Tale of the Nonne

He saydest thou right nobl in this manere  
Ther nas but o godd lord in sothfastnes  
And nobl of thre hold mayst thou be wytnes

That thal I telle ad? she or that I goo  
Right as a man hath sapiences thre  
Memory engyne and? intellect also  
So in such beynge of dyuynyte  
Thre persones may there ryght wel be  
Tho gan she there ful bisily hym preche  
Of cristys sone & of his paynes treche

And many poyntis of his passyon  
Holv goddis sone in this world was withholde  
To do mankynde pleyh remysse  
That ten bounde in synnes and? caris colde  
Alle thise thynges she vnto Tiburæ tolde  
And? after this Tiburæ in good? entent  
With valeryan to pope vrbain went

That thankid god & with glad herte & light  
He cristenyd? hym & made hym in that place  
parficht in his lernyng goddys knyght  
And after this Tiburæ gat such grace  
That euery day he salb in tyme and? space  
The aungel of god? & euery maner bone  
That he god? aydd? it was sped? ful sone

It were ful hard? by order for to seyn  
Holv many wondris ihesus for hym brought  
But atte last to telle short and? pleyh  
The sergeauntis of the twin hem sought  
And hem before almache the prefect brought  
Whiche hem apposid & knelbe al her entent  
And to the pimage of iubyter hem sent

And sayd who so wyl do no sacrefyse  
Swap of his hed this is my sentence here

## The Tale of the Nonne

Anone thysse martires that I polle deuyse  
One maxymus that was an offycere  
Of the prefectis and his counsellere  
Hem sent and the sayntis forth ladde  
Hym self he wepte for pyte that he hadde

When maximus had herd the sayntis lore  
He gat hym of the turmentours leue  
And had hem to his hous withouten more  
And with her prechyng or it were eue  
They gonne fro the turmentours for to reue  
And fro maxyme and fro his folke echone  
The fals feyth to trolbe in god allone

Sealy cam whan it was boye nyght  
With preestes that hem cristenyd al in fere  
And afterward whan day was boyn light  
Sealy sayde hem with a ful stedfast chere  
Nolb cristys olben knyghtis leef and dere  
Cast al alwey the werkis of derknesse  
And arme you wpth armys of brightnesse

Ye haue for soth y don a grete butayle  
Pour cure is don your feith hath you conserued  
Goth to the crowne of lyf that may not fayle  
The rightful Iuge whiche ye haue seruyd  
Shal reue it you as ye haue it deseruyd  
And whan this thyng was sayde as I deuyse  
Men ledde hem forth to do sacryfise

But whan they were to the place y brought  
To tellen shortly the conclusion  
They nolde enence ne sacrefyse right nought  
But on her knees setten hem a down  
With humbly herce and sad deuocioun  
And listen both her heedys in the place  
Her soules wente to the kyng of grace

## The Tale of the Nunne

This maymunus that salbe this thyng betyde  
With pyuous tene tolde it anon right  
That he her soules salbe to heuyn gelyde  
With aungels ful of clerenes and light  
And with his word conuertid many alpyght  
For whiche almachius dyd hym so to lere  
With whippis of led til he his lyf gan lere

Early hym took & buried hym anon  
By tiburce and valerian sothly  
Within her buryng place vnder the stoon  
And after this almachius hastely  
Wad his mynys teris fetchyn openly  
Early so that she myght in his presence  
Do sacrifice and jubiler euerence

But they conuerted at her wyse lore  
Weptyn ful sore and of ful credence  
Unto her worde and cryden more and more  
Eust goddis sene whiche withoute difference  
So very god this is our sentence  
That hath a seruaunt so good hym to serue  
This with o foyls we trolben though we serue

Almachius that herde of thys doynge  
Wad fetele Early that he myght her see  
And alderfirst this was his ayyng  
What maner woman art thou quod he  
I am a gentilwoman born quod she  
I aye the quod he though it the greue  
Of thy relygyon and of thy beleue

Why than began ye your questyon folly  
Quod she that wolde two answere conclude  
In one demaunde ye aydd lewoly  
Almachius answerde to that sympatude  
Of whens comyth thyn answer so rude  
Of whens qd she whan that she was freyned

## The Tale of the Nonne

Of conscience and of good feyth Inseyned

Almachius sayd ne takest thou no hede  
Of my polber/ & she answered hym thys  
Pour myght quod she is ful litil to drede  
For every mortal manns polber nys  
But like a bladder ful of wynde plys  
For with a neddis pynt wixen it is holbe  
May al the heste of it be leyde ful kolbe

Ful wrongfully began thou quod he  
And in wrong is yet al thy perseveraunce  
Wost thou not hold our prynces myghty & fre  
Have thus comaunded and made ordernaunce  
That every cristen wyght shal haue penaunce  
But yf that he his cristendom wyth seye  
And gon al quyt yf he wyl it reneye

Pour prynces even as pour nobley doth  
Quod she ceale in a woody sentece  
Ye make vs gylty and it is not soth  
For ye that knolven wel our innocence  
For as muche as we do ay reuerence  
To crist & for we bere a cristen name  
Ye put on vs a cryme and eke a blame

But we that knolven that name so  
For vertuous we may it not withseye  
Almach answered chese one of thyselbo  
Do sacrifice or cristendom reneye  
That thou molbe asape by that werye  
At whiche worde this holy blissful mayde  
Ban for to laughe & to the Juge sayde

O juge confused in thy nyete  
Wost thou that I reneye Innocence  
To make me a wycked wyght quod she  
To be dissymulith here in audyence

## The Tale of the Nonne

He startith and bodith in his aduertence  
To whom almace sayde o selp wretche  
Ne wost thou not how for my might may stretch

Haue not our myghty prynces yellen  
To me both polver and auctorite  
To make folk bothe drem & lypyn  
Why spekest thou than so proudly to me  
I speke not but stedfastly quod she  
Not proudly for I say as for my syde  
We hatyn dedely that vice of pryde

And yf thou drede not a soth for to here  
Thin wyl I shewe al openly by right  
Thou that hast made a ful grete lesynge here  
Thou sayst thy prynces haue yelle the myght  
Bothe for to slee and for to quychen a wyght  
That thou mayst but only lyf ferue  
Thou hast noon other polver ne non leue

But thou maist say thy prynces haue the makid  
Myngster of deth for yf thou speke of mo  
Thou liest for thy poure is ful nakyd  
Do wey thy boldnes sayd Almace tho  
And do sacrifice to our goddes or thou goo  
I wote not what wrong thou me proffre  
For I can suffre as can a philosophre

But that wrongis may I not endure  
That thou spekest of our goddis here quod she  
O wailly answere o nyce creature  
Thou saydest no word sith thou spakyst to me  
That I ne knele therwith thy nyce  
And that thou were in euery maner wyse  
A leyd offyce and a kyn Justyse

There lackith no thyng of thyng viter even  
But thou art blynd for thyng that we see alle

## The Tale of the Nonne

That is a stoon that molbe men wel aspyen  
That ylike stoon a god thou wolt it calle  
I rede the lete thy n honds vpon it falle  
And taste it wel & stoon thou shalt it fynde  
Syn that thou seest not wth thy n eyen blynde

It is a shame that the peple shal  
So shorne the & calyghe at thy folye  
For comynly men boote it wel ouer al  
That myghty god is in his heuenys hye  
And thys ymagys wel thou mayst aspre  
To the ne to hem self may do no profyte  
For in effect they be not worth a myte

This andy such other wordes sayde she  
And he way broth and lady men sholdy her led  
Hoom vntil her hous & in her hous quod he  
Wrenne her in a bath of flampes rede  
And as he had right so was it do in dede  
For in a bath they gonne her fast shyttyn  
Andy nyght & day fyre they vnder bettyn

The long nyght andy eke the day also  
For al the fyre and eke the grete hete  
She sat al coldy andy felt no maner woo  
It made her not a drope for to swete  
But in that bath her lyf she moot lete  
For almachius wth a ful wycked entent  
To sle her in the Bath his sonde to her sent

Thre strokis in the necke he smoot her tho  
The turmentour but for no maner chaunce  
He myght not symple her necke a tibo  
And for there was that tyme an ordenaunce  
That no man shold do to no yfone such penaunce  
The fourth strok to smyten soft or sore  
This turmentour ne durst do no more

## The Tale of the Nonne

But half dede with her neck coruyn there  
He left her lye and on his way is went  
The cristen folk which that aboute her were  
With shetis haue the blood by sent  
Three dayes luyd she in this turment  
And neuer asid hem the feyth to teche  
That she had festerd hem she gan to preche

And hem she gaf her mettablis & her thyng  
And to pope Urban toke hem the  
And sayd I askyd this of heuen kyng  
To haue respit three dayes and no moo  
To recomende to you or that I goo  
Thyse soules & and that I may do wiche  
Here of my hous perpetuelly a churche

Saynt Urban with his dekenys pryncely  
The body fet and buried it by nyght  
Among his other sayntis honestly  
Her hous the churche of saynt caly hight  
Saynt Urban sholbed it as he wel myght  
In which in to this day in nobyl wyse  
Men do to case & to his sayntes scrupse

Here endeth the seconde nonnes tale

## The Prologue

And begynneth the prologue  
Of the chynons yeman

**W**hen tolde was the tyf of saynt Geale  
Or he had ryden fully fyue myle  
At boughston vnder hle he gan a take  
A man that clothyd was in clothys blake  
And vndernethe he waaz a whyte surplice  
His hakeney whiche was of pomel greye  
So swete he that wonder was to see  
Hit semyd that he had pricked myllys thre  
About the peyntel stood the fowme ful hye  
He was of fowme as fleckyd as a pye  
The hakeney eke that his yeman rood vpon  
So swete that vnnethys myght it goon  
A male tbyfold vpon his crowyn lay  
It semed that he caryd lityl aray  
Al light for somer rood this worthy man  
And in myn herte to wonder I began  
What that he was til that I vnderstood  
Holt that his cloke was sollyd to his hood  
For whiche whan I had long awysed me  
I demed hym sum chanon for to be  
His hat hyng at his bak down by a lace  
For he had ryden more than trot or pace  
He rood ay prickyng as he were wood  
A cloke leef he had leyde vnder his hood  
For swoot and for to kepe his hede fro hete  
But it was joye for to see hym swete  
His forhed droppyd as a stylatory  
Were ful of planteyn or of peritory  
And whan he was come he gan crye  
God saue quod he this ioly compaignye  
Fast haue I pricked quod he for your sake  
By cause that I wolde you ouer take  
To riden in this mery compaignye  
His yeman was eke ful of curtesye

## The Prologue

And sayde siris noli in the morow tyde  
Out of your hostery I saild you ryde  
And warned here my lord and souerayn  
Whiche that to ride with you is ful feyn  
For his disport he buyth dalpauce  
Frend for thy warnyng god geue þ good chauce  
Than sayde our host certayn it wolde seme  
Thy lord were wyse & so þ may wel deme  
He is ful iocunde also dar I ley  
Can he ought telle a mery tale or tley  
With whiche he glad may this compaign  
Who sit my lord/þe sit withouten lye  
He can of myrre and eke of zolice  
Not but þnoli also sit trustyþ me  
And þ hym knelbe as wel as do I  
Þe wolde wonder how wel and craftely  
He coude werke and that in sondry wyse  
He hath taken on hym many a grette emprise  
Whiche were ful hard for ony that is lye  
To bryng aboute but they of hym it lere  
As homely as he ridyþ amongys polle  
Yf þ hym knelbe it wolde be for your prole  
Þe wolde not forgoon his acquyntaunce  
For mykyl good I dar ley in balauce  
Al that I haue in my possessyon  
He is a man of hygh discrecion  
I warne you he is a passyng wyse man  
Wel qd our host I pray the telle me than  
Is he a clerk or none tel me what he is  
A clerk nay nay he is gretter than a clerk þlpe  
Sayde this yeman and in wordes felbe  
Hoost & of his craft somwhat wyl I shelve  
But my lord can such a subtilte  
But al his craft þe may not witte of me  
For al the ground to caunterbury toun  
He coude al clene turne þp so down  
And paue it al with siluer and wyth golde  
And when this yeman hath thus tolde

## The Prologue

Comto our hoost / he sayde benedicite  
This thyng is wonder merueylous to me  
Syn that thy worde is of so hygh prudence  
By cause of which shold men hym reuerence  
That of his worshyp reckyth he so lyte  
his ouerest slope is not worth a myte  
As in effect to hym so moot y goo  
It is al laudy and to tere also  
Why is thy lord so sluttysse I the pray  
And of wolber is better cloth to kepe  
Yf that his dede accorde wyth his speche  
Tel me that and that I the beseeche  
Why quod this yeman wherto age ye of me  
God helpe me so for he shal neuer the  
But I wyl not auolbe that I sey  
And therfore kepe it secret I you prey  
It is to wyse in feyth as I beleue  
That is ouer doo it wyl neuer preue  
And right as clerkys sayn it is a vice  
Wherfore in that I holde hym selvd and nyce  
For whan a man hath ouer grete a wytt  
ful ofte it happith hym to mys vse it  
So doth my lord and that me greuyth sore  
God it amende I can say no more  
Therof no force good yeman quod our hoost  
Syn of the connyng of thy lord thou hoost  
Tel thou he doth tel on nolv hardelye  
Syn that he is so crafty and so slye  
Where duelle ye yf it to telle he  
In the suburbs of a toun quod he  
Lurkyng in fernys & in lanyes blynde  
Where as thise robbers & thise theuys by kynde  
Holden her ferdful pryuy residence  
As they that dar not shalbe her presence  
So fare we yf we shal say the sothe  
Nolv quod our hoost lette me talke tothe  
Why art thou so discouryd in thy face  
Peter quod he god yeue it hardy grace

## The Prologue

I am so bid the hote fyre to sholue  
That it hath chaunged my colour I trolue  
I am not wont in no myrour to pry  
But swynke sore and lerne multyplye  
We shundryn euer and polbryn in the fyre  
And for al that we saylen of our desire  
For euer we lacke our conclusion  
To mykyl folke we do illusion  
And trolle gold? be it a pound? or flou  
Or ten or twelue or many sommys mo  
And make hem bene attē lēste they  
That of a pounde we coude make twy  
It is fals and ay we haue good? hope  
It for to do and after it we grope  
But that science is so fer vs befor  
We molben not al though we had? it sworn  
It ouer take it flat alwey so faste  
It wol vs make leggars attē laste  
Whyle this yeman was thus in his talkyng  
This chanon drewh hym nere and herd? al thyng  
Whiche this yeman spak? for suspencion  
Of mennys spech euer had? this chanon  
For caton sayth he that gylty is  
Demyth al thyng to be spoke of hym ylwe  
That was the cause he gan so nygh dralwe  
To this yeman to serkyn al his salwe  
And thus he sayde to his yeman tho  
Holde thou thy pees and speke no wordys mo  
For yf thou do thou shalt it dre abye  
Thou sklaundrist me here in this companye  
And eke discaueryst that thou sholdst hyde  
Ye quod? our host tel on what so letyde  
Of c. his thertynge recke thou not a myte  
In fertyth quod he no more I do but a lyte  
And when this chanon salwe it wolde not be  
But that his yeman wolde telle his pryncipe  
He fled? alwey for fertyth sorolwe & shame  
A ha quod? the yeman here shal ryse a game

## The Prologue

Al that I can anon I wyl you telle  
Syn he is goon the foule fende hym quelle  
For neuer here after wyl I with hym mete  
For peny ne for pound I you byete  
He that me first brought to that game  
Or that he dye sorowbe haue he and shame  
For it is ernest to me by my feyth  
That fele y well what that ony man sayth  
And yet for al my smert and al my greef  
For al my sorowbe labour and myschyeef  
I coude neuer leue it in no wyse  
Now wolde to god my wyf myght suffyse  
To tellyn al that longyth to that art  
But netheles you wyl I telle a part  
Syn that my word is goon I wol not spare  
Suche thyng as I knowe I wyl declare

Here endyth the prologue  
of the Chanons yeman

## The tale of the chanoine yeman



And begynneth the tale

**W**ith this chanon I dwellde yn yere  
And of his science am I neuer the nere  
Al that I had I haue lost ther by  
And godd boote so haue mo than I  
There as I was wont to be right fresch & gay  
Of clothyng and of other goodz away  
Now may I were an hore by on myn bed  
And where my colour was both fresch & rede  
Now it is wan and of a ledyn helpe  
Who so it vith fore shal he telpe  
And of myn swynk y blent is myn ey  
So much auauntage it is to multelye  
That slepyng science hath made me so sure  
That I haue no good where that euer I fare  
And yet I am endettid so sore therby  
Of gold that I howled twelvy

## The tale of the chanoine yeman

That whyle I lyue I that it quyte neuer  
Let euery man felbaar by me for euer  
What maner man that casteth hym thereto  
If he contynue I holde his thurst y do  
For helpe me god? therby shal he not wynnne  
But enpire his purs & make his witte thynne  
And when he thowou his madnes and? folye  
Hath lost his olben good? thowou jepardy  
Than he exatith other folke thereto  
To lese her good? as he hym self hath doo  
For vnto wretchys joye it is and? ese  
To haue her felowis in payne and? disese  
For thus was y onys lernyd? of a clerke  
Of that no charge I wyl speke of our werke  
When he be there as he shal exatise  
Our eluyssh craft he semyn wonder wyse  
Our termys ben so clerghal and? so queynite  
I sholbe the fyre tyl my herte feynite  
What shold I telle ecke proporaion  
Of thynges whiche he werkyn vp on  
As on v or vi vnaio may wel be  
Of syluer or somme other quentite  
And kesy me to telle yow the namys  
Of orpement brent bonys iwen squampys  
That in to powder grounde he ful smal  
And in an erthen pot holt put is al  
And? salt petre and? also payre  
Beforen thys powderys that I speke of here  
And wel y couerid? with a lampe of glas  
And of muche other thyng whiche that ther was  
And of the pott & and glassis enlutynge  
That of the eyer myght passe out no thyng  
And? of the fyre esy and? smert also  
Whiche that was made & of the care and? woo  
That he had in our mater sublympnge  
And in a malgampnge and? calcanynge  
Of quyesyluer y clepyd mercury crude  
For al our slighthis he can not conclude

## The tale of the chanoine yeman

Our orpement and sublimyd mercury  
Our grounden sturge eke on the persury  
Of eche of theym of vncis a certeyn  
Not helppeth vs our labour is in veyn  
And eke our spiritis ascencoun  
Ne our maters that lyen al fye adoun  
Molte in our werkynge nothyng auayle  
For lost is al our labour and traueyle  
And al the coste a thyenty deuyll wey  
Is lost also whiche we on it leye  
Ther is also ful many another thyng  
That is to our craft apperteynyng  
Though I shold orde hem ther as ne can  
By cause that I am a leibdy man  
Yet wil I telle hem as they come to mynde  
Though I ne can not sette them in the kynde  
As boole Armonyak verdegreted stones  
And sondry vesselys made of erthe and glas  
Our Brynnals and our desanfories  
Viols crossollettis and sublimatoryis  
Concurbitres and Alembiks eke  
And other such dreynolds a leek  
Not nedith it to reserue hem alle  
Watres rubysfying and boles galle  
Arsenyk sal armonyak and Brynnstone  
And erbs eke coude I telle many one  
As egremoigne Valerian and lunarye  
And other such yf that me list to tarpe  
Our lampes stennynge nyght and day  
To brynge aboute our craft yf we may  
Our furnes eke of calinacion  
And of watres alkyfacion  
Conflectyd tyme chalk gleyr of an eye  
Polidris dyuerse asshis donge pis and cleyr  
Serpent pottis salt petir Vitriole  
And dyuerse fyris made of wodde and cole  
Sal tartir alcoly and sal preparat  
And combust maters and coagulat

## The Tale of the chanoins yeman

Cley maad with hors donge māns her or ople  
Of tartre alym glas herme wort & argule  
Rosealgar & other maters enbibynge  
And eke of our maters encorpyngge  
And of our siluer cytrynacion  
Our sementynge & also fermentacion  
Our Ingottis testes and many mo  
I wyl pou telle as me was taught also  
The iij spiritis and the bodys viij  
By order as I herde my lord neueyn  
The first spirit quysiluer cleppd is  
The second orpiment the thridde ylbis  
Sal armonyak & the fourth brymstone  
The bodys seyn boke hem her anon  
Sol gold is / & luna siluer be threpe  
Mars Iren Mercury quysiluer be clepe  
Saturnus led and Jubitex is tyn  
And Venus coppr by my fader kyn  
This cursid craft who wol exerce  
He shal no good haue that hym may suffyse  
For al the good he spendith ther aboute  
He lese shal therof haue I no doute  
Who so that listeth vtter his folwe  
Let hym come forth & lerne to multiplie  
And euery man that hath ought in his cofre  
Let hym apere & beye a philosophre  
Prest or chanon or ony other wight  
Though he sitte at his booke day and nyght  
In lernynge of this elyssh nyce lore  
Alle is in weyn and parde mochil more  
Is to lerne a selbd man this subtilte  
He speke not therof it wol not be  
And can he let true or can he non  
As in effect he shal fynde it allone  
For bothe tibo by my sauacion  
Concludyn in multiplicacion  
Al siche weel when they haue al y do  
This is to sayn they fuylen bothe tibo

## The Tale of the chanoine yeman

Pet forgot I to make rehersall  
Of watris cōfess and of lymaple  
And of bodys mortificaciō  
And also of her enduraciō  
Ophis ablaciōs metall fusibyl  
To telle you al it wolde passe ony bil  
That olibre is therfore as for the best  
Of thysse nampes nold I me reste  
For as I trolde I haue told y nold  
To trespse a fende al lōke he neuer so colde  
A nay let he the philosophis stoon  
Elixer he cleppyn he sekyn fast e soon  
For had he hym than were he sikir y nold  
But vnto god of heuyn I make auowde  
For al our craft when he haue al y do  
And al our slepyght he wyl not come vs to  
He hath maad vs spende muche good  
For sorow therof almost he weyen wold  
But that good hope creppeth in our herte  
Supposyng euer though he sore smerte  
To be releuyd by hym afterwarde  
Suche supposynge and hope is sharpe e harde  
I warne you wel it is to seken cure  
That future tēps hath made men disseuer  
In trust therof al that euer they had  
Pet of that art they konne not weye sad  
For vnto hem it is a bitter swete  
So sempth it for ne had they but a shete  
Whiche that myght wrappyn hem ynnē a nyght  
And a brate to walkyn ynnē by day light  
They wolde it selle e spende it in this craft  
They can not seyntē tyl nothyng be last  
And euer more where cure that they goon  
Men may hem kenne by smel of brymstoon  
For al the world they synkyn as a goot  
Her sauour is so rammysch e so hoot  
That though a man a myle from hem be  
The sauour wol enfect hem trustyly me

## The Tale of the chanoines yeman

So thus by smelkyng & thredbare away  
If that men list thysse folke knowe they may  
And yf a man wol aye hem pruely  
Why they be clothyd so vntyrfully  
Right anon they wol roun in his ere  
And saien yf that they aspyed were  
Men wolde hem sle by cause of her scienc  
So thus thysse folke betrayen Innocenc  
Was ouer this I goo my tale vnto  
Er that the pot be on the fyre y do  
And metallys a certeyn quantite  
My lord hem temprith & noman but he  
Nob is he goon I dar say boldely  
For as men say he can do craftely  
Algate I boot wel he hath such a name  
And yet ful oft he renneth in the blame  
And wyte ye how ful ofte it farith so  
The pot to brekith & farewell al is do  
The metallys ben of so grette violence  
Our wallys molde not make hem resistance  
But yf they were brought of lyme & stoon  
They persyn so & thorow the wal they goon  
And som of hem synke down in to the ground  
Thus haue we lost by tyme many a pound  
And somme ar skaterid al the floor about  
Somme leyn in to the roof withouten doute  
Though y the fend in our sight hym not shelve  
I trow that he with vs be that ilke shelve  
In alle where he is lord and sire  
He is ther more woo ne rancour ne ire  
Whan that our pot is broken as I haue sayd  
Every man chyt & holdyth hym cupl apayd  
Somme sayd it was of the fyre makynge  
Some sayd nay it was of the bolyngge  
Than was I ferd for that was myn offyce  
Stral quod the thyrde ye he salld and nyte  
It was not temprid as it ought to be  
Nay quod the fourth seynt & herkenyth me

## The tale of the chanoine yeman

Why cause our fyre was not maad of kex  
What is the cause & other none sithen  
I can not telle where on it was a longe  
But wel I boote greet serps is he amonge  
What qd my lord there is no more to doon  
Of these parcellys I wyl be waar eftsoon  
I am right siker that the pot was crasid  
We as he may be ye not amasid  
As usage is let swep the floor swithe  
Pluk vp your hertes & be glad and blithe  
The mullok on an hipe swepid was  
And on the floor cast a canuas  
And al the mullek in a side y throlwe  
And siftid and pikid many a throlwe  
Parde qd one somlbat of our metal  
Pet is ther here though we haue not al  
And though this thyng myschippid hath as nold  
Another tyme it may be wel ynold  
We must put our good in auenure  
A marchaunt parde may not ay endure  
Tastith me wel in his prosperite  
Sometyme his goodis ben drenchid in the see  
And som tyme it comyth sauf vnto londe  
Qd my lord the next tyme I wyl fonde  
To brynge our craft al in another plyte  
And but I doo firs let me haue the wyte  
Eke was a defaute in somlbat wel I boote  
Another sayde the fyre was ouer hoot  
But be it hoot or colde I dar say this  
That we concluden euer more amys  
We faylen allway of that we wol dyn haue  
And in our madnes euer more we raue  
And whan we be to gyder euerichone  
Every man semyth as wyse as salamon  
But al thyng which that shyneth as gold  
It is no gold as I haue herd told  
Ne every appyl that is fayr at eye  
Nys not good what so we clappe or crye

## The Tale of the chanoins yeman

Right so it farith amongis be  
He that semyth wysse by swete ihesus  
Is most fool when it comyth to the preef  
And he that semyth trewist is a theef  
That shal ye knowe or that I from you wende  
Be that my tale be told? Unto an ende  
There was a chanon of relygyon  
Amongis be wolde enfect al a toun  
Though it were as grete as was nyngue  
Rome Alysaunder Troie or other thre  
His slepyghtis & his infynyt falsnes  
Ne coude no man bryte as I ges  
Though that he myght lyue a thousand yere  
In al the world of falsnes nys his yere  
For in his termys he wyl hym so wynde  
And speke his wordes in so slepy kynde  
When he comen shal with ony wight  
That he wol make hym doct anon right  
But it a fend? he as hym self is  
ful many a man hath he begyled at this  
And wol yf that he lyue may a whyle  
And yet men ride & goon many a myle  
Hym for to seke & haue his acquyntaunce  
Not knowyng of his fals gouernaunce  
And yf ye list to geue me audience  
I wyl it telle here in your presence  
But worshipful chanoins relygious  
Ne demyth not that I sklaunder your hous  
Al though my tale of a chanon be  
Of euery order: sum shalbe is parde  
As god forbede that al a companye  
Shold telde a synguler manys folye  
To sklaunder you is no thyng myn entent  
But to correcte that is mys went  
This tale was not only tolde for you  
But eke for other moos ye wot wel holw  
That among cristys apostles thelue  
There was no traytour but judas hym selue

## The tale of the chanoine yeman

Than why shold the wemenaunt haue a blame  
That gyltes were by you I say the same  
Saue only this yf ye wyl herkyn me  
Yf ony Judas in your couent be  
Kemeupth hym letymes I you rede  
Yf shame or los may causyn ony drede  
And be no thyng displeid I you pray  
But in this caas herkyn what I say

**I**n London was a preest annueler  
That therin had duelt many a yer  
Whiche was so plesaunt & so scrupysable  
Unto the wyf where as he was at table  
That he wolde suffre hym no thyng to pay  
For lord ne clothynge wente he neuer so gay  
And spendynge siluer had he ryght ynolb  
Therof no force in plesaunce went his plow  
But for to telle you forth of this chanon  
That brought this preest to confusion  
This fals chanon cam vpon a day  
Vnto the prestys chambyr where he lay  
Besechynge hym to lene hym a certeyn  
Of gold & he wold quyt hym ageyn  
Lene me a mark quod he but dayes thre  
At my day I wyl sauns fayle quyte it the  
And yf so be thou fynde me thenne fals  
Another day hangge me by the shals  
This preest hym took a mark & that as swithe  
And this chanon hym thankyd ofte swithe  
And took his leue & went forth his wey  
And atte thridde day broughte his money  
And to this preest he took this gold agayn  
Wherof this preest was wonder glady & fayn  
Certes quod he no thyng anoyth me  
To lene a man an nobyl or tibo or thre  
Or what thyng were in my possessyon  
Whan he is so trewe of condycion  
That in no wyse he breke wyl his day

## The Tale of the chanoins yeman

To such a man I can not sey nay  
What god this chanon shold I be vntrely  
May that were a thyng falsyn of nelve  
Trowth is a thyng that I wol euer kepe  
In to that day in which I shal crepe  
In to my graue or ellys crist forbode  
Beleuyth this as sikir as the crede  
God I thanke & in good tyme be it sayd  
That ther nas neuer man yet euyl payd  
For golde ne siluer that he me lende  
He neuer falsfide in my herte I mente  
And sir quod he nold of my pryncipe  
Syn ye so goodliche haue be to me  
And kyndth to me so grette gentilnes  
Somwhat to quyte with your kyndnes  
I wyl you shew yf that ye list here  
I wyl you teche plener the matere  
How I can lerkyn in philosophye  
Take good hede ye shul wel seen at eyr  
That I wyl a masterye do or I goo  
Ye sir quod the preest & wol ye soo  
Mary therof I pray you hertely  
At your commaundement sir trewly  
Quod the chanon & ellys crist forbode  
To how this theef coude his scruple lode  
Ful soth it is that such profuyl scruple  
Stynketh as witnesseth the olde wyse  
And that right sone I wol it verifie  
In this chanon rote of al trecherye  
That euer more delpte hath & gladnes  
Such fendly thoughtis in his herte impress  
How cristys peple he may to myschref brynge  
God kepe he from his fals dissimulynge  
Nought wist this preest with whom that he dwelt  
He of his harmes comyng nothyng he felt  
O sely preest o sely Innocent  
With couetyse anon thou shal be blent  
O grakles ful blynde is thy concept

## The tale of the chanoins pema

No thyng art thou ware of his dyscrt  
Whiche that this fox shapen hath to the  
His wylys his branchis thou mayst not fle  
Wherefore to go to the conclusion  
That refectyth to thy confusion  
Unhappy man anon I wyl me hys  
To tellyn thyn vnlwyte & thy folye  
And eke the falsnes of that other wretche  
As ferforth as my connyng wol stretch  
This chanon was my lord & wolde bene  
Syr hoost in feyth & by heuens quene  
It was another chanon and not he  
That can an hundred folde more subtilte  
He hath betrayed folk many a tyme  
Of his falsnes it dulleth me to ryme  
Euer when I speke of his falsheede  
For shame of hym my clerkis becom redde  
Algas they begynnen for to golbe  
For neednes haue I non right wel I knowe  
In my dysage for fumes dyuerce  
Of metal whiche ye haue herd me rekerce  
Consumed & wastid hath my neednes  
Nol takith hede of this chanoins cursidnes  
Sir quod he to the preest lette your man goon  
For quysilver that he hadde it anon  
And lette hym brynge vnto thre or thre  
And when he comyth as fast ye shal see  
A wonder thyng whiche ye shal neuer or this  
Syr quod the preest it shal be doo p'pys  
He had his seruaunt fet hym this thyng  
And he alreedy was at his biddynge  
And went hym forth & cam anon agayn  
With this quysilver shortly for to seyn  
And took the vnto thre to the chanon  
And he hem leyde wel & fayne a down  
And bad the seruaunt colis for to brynge  
That he anon myght goo to his werkynge  
The colys right anon were y fet

## The Tale of the chanons yeman

And this chanon took out a crosselet  
Of his bosom & sheld it to the preest  
This instrument quod he whiche that thou seest  
Take in thy hond & put thy self therin  
Of this quysilver an ounce and begyn  
In the name of crist to beye a philosophye  
Ther be ful felwe whiche I wolde it profite  
To selve hem thus muche of my science  
For here shul ye see by experience  
That this quysilver I wol mortifye  
Right in your sight anon withouten lye  
And make it as good sylver and as fyn  
As there is ony in your pure or myn  
Or elles where and make it makyable  
And elles hold me fals and unstable  
Amongis folk for euer to apere  
I haue a poudre that cost me dere  
Shal make alle good for it is cause of alle  
My connyng whiche I you selve shalle  
Woydith your man & lette hym be withoute  
And shite the dore whyles he be there aboute  
Our pryuyte that no man be aspye  
Whyles that he worke in this philosophye  
Al as he had fulfilled was in dede  
This plike seruaunt anon out yede  
And his mayster shytte the dore anon  
And to her labour spedely they goon  
This preest at this cursid chanons byddynge  
Up on the fyre right anon set thys thyng  
And blew the fyre and bysied hym ful faste  
And this chanon in to the crosselet caste  
A powder not I neuer where of it was  
I made of chylke or of erthe or of glas  
Or somwhat elles was not worth a flye  
To blynde with this preest & had hym here  
The colles for to couchyn alle aboute  
For in tokenynge that I the loue  
Quod this chanon thyn hondis tbo

## The tale of the chanoys yeman

Shal werke al thyng that here shal he do  
Graunt mercy qd the prest & was right glad  
And couchyd the colis as the chanon bad  
And whyle he bys was / this fendly wretch  
This false chanon the soules sende hym fetch  
Out of his bosom toke a lechyn cole  
In whiche ful subtilly was made an hole  
And therin was put of syluer lymayl  
An ense and stoppid was withouten fayl  
The hole with wax to kepe the lymayl yn  
And vnderseondith that this false gyn  
Was not made there but it was maad before  
And other thyngis that I you telle shal more  
Here after whiche that he wyth hym broughe  
Er he cam there hym to begyle he thought  
And so he dede or that they yede at lymne  
Til he had ternyd hym he coude not tlymne  
It dullyth me wthan that I of hym speke  
Of his falshe fayn wolde I me wreke  
Yf I wyse hold but he is here and there  
He is so varpaunt he abydeeth nolibere  
But takith hede sitis for goddis loue  
He toke his cole of whiche I spake aboue  
And in his hond he hure it pruely  
And whilis this prest couchyd easily  
The colis as I you tolde or this  
This chanon sayde frende ye doo amys  
This is not colchid as it ought to be  
But sone I shal amenden it quod he  
Nolv let me medle therwith but a whyle  
For of polv I haue pyte by saynt Gyle  
Ye be right hot I see hold ye swete  
Haue here a clothe & wyxe albey the wete  
And whilis the prest wipyd his face  
This chanon toke his cole with sory grace  
And leyde it aboue vpon the myddelbarde  
Of the crosselet & bleib wel afterward  
Tyl that the colis gan fast to burne

## The Tale of the chanons yeman

Holb yue be drynke quod the chanon thenne  
As swythe al shal be wel I vndertake  
Syt we down & let be mery make  
And when that this chanon his techyn cole  
Hady brought & the lymayl out of the hole  
In to the crosselet it fyl anon down  
And so it must nedys by reson  
Syn it so cunyn aboue couchid was  
But therof wist the preest no thyng alas  
He demyd al the coles hiche good  
For of the sight he no thyng vnderstood  
And when this alkampstere salu his tyme  
Kysse by sir preest he sayd anon & stonde byme  
And for I boote wel yngot haue ye non  
Goth walkith forth & dryngeth a chalkstoon  
For I wyl make of it the same shappe  
That an yngot is yf it may shappe  
And drynge eke wylth you a bolle or a panne  
Ful of water & ye shul wel se thanne  
Holb that our besynes shal thryue and preue  
And yet for ye shal haue no mysteleue  
Ne wrong concept of me in your absence  
I wyl not be out of your presence  
But go wylth you & come wylth you agayn  
The chambyr dore shortly for to seyn  
They openyd & shyt & went for wey  
And forth wylth hem they took the key  
And comen aghen wylthout ony delay  
What shold I tary al the longe day  
He took the chalk and shoop it in wylse  
Of an yngot as I shal you deuyse  
I sey he took out of his owen sleue  
A tyn of siluer euyl moot be cleue  
Whiche that he was but an vnce of weyghthe  
And takith hede now of his cursid slepyghthe  
He shoop his yngot in lengthe and in brede  
Of this tyn wylthouten ony drede  
So slighly that the preest it not aspyed

## The tale of the chynone yeman

And in his sleue agayn he gan it hyde  
And from the fyre he took vp the matere  
And in the yngot he put it wpyth mery chere  
And in to the water vessel he it caste  
Whan that hym lste & lud the preest as faste  
Loke what there is/ put in thy hond & grope  
Thou shalt fynde there syluer as I hope  
What deupl of helle shold it ellis be  
Shuynge of siluer siluer is sir parde  
He put his hond yn & took vp a tpyne  
Of siluer fyne & glady in euery tpyne  
Whiche was this preest when he salde it was so  
Goddis blissynge & his moders also  
And al hablebes haue ye sir chanon  
Sayd this preest & I her malison  
But & ye touchsaf to tceke it me  
This nobyl craft & this subtilte  
I wyl be your man in al that euer I may  
Quod this chanon yet wol I make assay  
The second tyme that ye molbe take hede  
And be expert in this at your nede  
Another day assay in myn absence  
This disaplyne and this crafty scienc  
Let take another vnce quod he tho  
Of quyesiluer withoute wordis moo  
And do therwpyth as ye haue do or this  
With that other which that noll siluer is  
The preest hym bespeth al that euer he can  
To do as this chanon this cursid man  
Comaunded hym and faste lbelbe the fyre  
For to come to the effect of his desire  
And this chanon right in this mene whyle  
Al redy was this preest for to begyle  
And for countenaunce in his hond bare  
An hollw sticke take kepe and felbare  
In the ende of which an vnce and more  
Of siluer symapl put as sayde is before  
Was in his coke & stowyd with lye & beel

## The Tale of the chanons yeman

For to kepe in his lymayl euery deel  
And whyle the prest was in his besynes  
This chanon with his sticke gan hit dresse  
To hym anon and his polvder cast yn  
As he dyd erst / the deupl out of his skyn  
Hym turne I prey to god for his falschode  
For he was euer fals in thought & dede  
And with his sticke aboue his crosselet  
That was ordeyned with that fals get  
He stired the colis til alle relente began  
The wey aginst the fyre as euery man  
But it a fool he boot wel it must nedde  
And al that in the sticke was out yede  
And in the crosselet hastily fel  
Now good sirs what wyl ye set than wel  
Whan that this prest was thus begyled agayn  
Supposyng nought but trolthe soth to seyn  
He was so glad I can not expres  
In no maner his myrthe & his gladnes  
And to the chanon he profyd eysone  
Wode & good ye quod the chanon anone  
Though I be poure crafty thou shalt me fynde  
I warne the wel yet is ther more behynde  
Is ther ony copir here ynn quod he  
Ye quod the prest sir I trolbe ther be  
Elke go by vs sum & that as slypthe  
Now good sir go forth thy wey and hve the  
He went his wey & with his copir cam  
And the chanon in his hond it nam  
And of that copir he lered out an vnce  
Al to symple is my tunge to pronounce  
As to mynysteir of my wylt the doublenes  
Of this chanon wote of al cursidnes  
He sempd freedly to hem that knew hym nought  
But he was fendly both in herte and thought  
It berieneth me to telle of his falsnes  
And netheles yet wol I hit expres  
To that entent that men molbe belvaar therby

## The tale of the chanons yeman

And for none other cause trewly  
He put this vnce of copur in his crosselet  
And on the fyre as slypthe he it set  
And cast in powder & made the preest to blowe  
And in his workynge for to stoupe solwe  
As he dede er and al was but a jape  
Right as hym list the preest he made his ape  
And after in the yngot he it cast  
And in the panne put it atte last  
Of water and yn he put his olven hond  
And in his sleue as ye befor hand  
Herde me telle he had of siluer a tynne  
He slightly took it out this cursid syn  
Ombetynge of the preest of this fals craft  
And in the pannys botom he it last  
And in the water rumbelith to and fro  
And wonder pruely he took vp also  
The copur tyn not knolbynge the preest  
And hid it and hym hent by the breest  
And to hym spak & thus he sayde in game  
Stoupiþ a down by god ye be to blame  
Helpe me now as I dyd you whyþe er  
Put in your hond and lokyth what is there  
This preest took vp this siluer tyn anon  
And than sayd the chanon let vs goon  
With this in tynnes which þe haue brought  
To som goldsmith to loke yf they be ought  
For by my feyth I holde for myn hood  
But yf they were siluer fyne and good  
And that as slypthe preuyd it shal be  
Unto the goldsmith with thys tynnes thre  
They went & put thys tynnes in assay  
To fyre and hampr myght no man say nay  
But that they were as hem ought to be  
This sottid preest who was gladder than he  
Was neuer erid gladder ayense the day  
He nyghtyngale in the seson of may  
Was neuer noon that best list to synge

## The tale of the chanoine yeman

Ne lady lusty in carolynge  
Or for to speke of loue or womanhode  
Ne knyght in armys done a hardy dede  
To stonden in grace of his lady dere  
Than had this preest this sory craft to lere  
And to the chanon thus he spak and sayde  
That for the loue of god that for vs al deyde  
And as I may deserue it vnto polb  
What shal this recyte coste tel me nold  
By our lady quod this chanon it is dete  
I warne you wel that saue I & a fore  
In Englonde can no man it make  
No force quod he nold sit for goddis sake  
What shal I paye tel me I you pray  
Ibys qd he it is ful dere I say  
Sir at o word yf that it list you haue  
Ye shul paye xl pound so god me saue  
And nere the frendshyp that ye dyd or thys  
To me shold ye paye more ybys  
This preest the summe of xl pound anone  
Of noblis fet and took hem euerychone  
To this chanon for this ilke recit  
Al his werkynge was but fraude and disreit  
Sir preest he sayd I kepe to haue no loos  
Of my craft for I wyl kepe it choos  
And as ye loue me kepe ye it secet  
For yf men knowe al my subtilte  
By god they wolde haue so grette enuye  
To me by cause of my philosophye  
I shold be dede ther were non other wey  
God it forbede quod the preest what ye sey  
Yet had I leuer spende al the good  
Whiche that I haue or ellys were I wood  
Than that ye shold falle in such a myschief  
For your good wyl sir haue ye right good preest  
Quod this chanon & farewell graunt mercy  
And went his wey & nener the preest hym sy  
After that day / & when that this preest shold

## The tale of the chanons yeman

Makyn assay at such tyme as he wolde  
Of this recit farewel it wolde not be  
So thus seiaped and begyled was he  
Thus maketh he his introduction  
To brynge folke to her destructyon  
Considereth sitis how that in ech estat  
Wetlpye men and gold there is debat  
So ferforth that vnnethis is ther noon  
This multiplyng blyndeth so many one  
That in good feyth y trowe that it be  
The cause grettist of such scarfite  
Thyse philosophis spekyng so mysfully  
In this craft that men can not come thereby  
For ony wyt that men now haue now adayys  
They now wel chytren as don Jappys  
And in her tymys settyn her lust and peyn  
But to her purpos shal they neuer attayne  
A man may lightly lerne yf he haue aught  
To multiplye & brynge his good to naught  
To which a lucre is in this lusey game  
A mannyes myrthe it wol turne vnto grame  
And empte also grette and hurp pursis  
And makyn folke for to purchace cursis  
Of hem that haue her good to hem lende  
O fy for shame tho that haue be brende  
Alas can they not fle the fyris hete  
Ye that it vse I rede that ye it lete  
Lest that ye lese al for let than neuer is late  
Neuer to thryue were to longe a date  
Though ye prolle euer neuer shul ye it fynde  
Ye be as bolde as is luard the blynde  
That blundrith forth & parel castyth none  
He is as bolde to renne ayenst a stoon  
As for to goo besydes in the Wey  
So faryn ye that multiplye I sey  
Yf that your eyen can not see a right  
Loke that your mynde lacke not his sight  
For though that ye loke right & wood & stare

## The tale of the chanoins yeman

Ye shul bynne neuer of that chaffare  
But waste al that ye molb rype & rende  
Withdralbe the fyre lest it to fast brenne  
Medlith no more with that art I mene  
For yf ye do your thryft is goon ful clene  
And right as swythe I wyl yow telle here  
What philosophres dyd in this matere  
So thus sayth arnolde of the nelve toun  
As his rosary makyth mentioun  
He sayth right thus wythouten ony lye  
Ther may no man mercury mortefye  
But yf it be with his brotheris knoblechyng  
So hold that he whiche first sayde this thyng  
Of philosophres fadir was hermes  
He saith hold that the dragon douteles  
He dyeth not but yf that he be sleyn  
With his brother & that is for to seyn  
By the dragon mercury and none other  
He vnderstandyth & bymstoon he his brother  
That out of sol & luna were y dralbe  
And therfore sayd he take hede to my salve  
Let no man bysye hym this art for to seeke  
But he the entencion & the speche  
Of philosophres vnderstonde can  
And yf he do he is a lechyd man  
For this sarnes and this kunnyng sayde he  
Is of the secret of secretis parde  
Also ther was a disaple of plato  
That on a tyme sayde his mayster to  
As his booke semoz wol here wytnes  
And this was his demaunde in sothfastnes  
Tel me the name of that pryuy stoon  
And plato answeerde vnto hym anon  
Take the stoon that Thitanes men name  
Whiche is that god he magnacia is the same  
Sayde plato ye sir is it thus  
This is ignotum per ignotus  
What is magnacia good? sir I yow pryse

## The Tale of the chanoins yeman

It is a water that is maad? I sey  
Of elementis foure quod? plato  
Tel me the wote good? spr quod? he tho  
Of that water yf it be your wyllle  
May nay qd? plato certeyn that I wyllle  
The philosophis were sworn euerychone  
That they shold? discouere it to noon  
Ne in no book it writyn in no maner  
For vnto god? it is so leef & dere  
For he wol not that it discoueryd? be  
But where it likyth to his wyte  
Man to enspre and? eke vnto defende  
Whan that hym liketh so this is the ende  
Than conclude I thus sith that god? of it wyte  
He wol not that the philosophis neygh  
Hold that a man shal come vnto this secon  
I rede as for the best let it goon  
For who so makyth god? his aduer?ary  
As for to werkyn ony thyng? in contrary  
Of his wyll? neuer shal he neuer thryue  
Though that he multiplie terme of his lyue  
And there a wynt for endyd? is my tale  
God sende euery good? man love of his tale

Here endeth the tale of the Chanons  
yeman of multiplication

The tale of the doctour of physyk



And beginneth the tale of  
the doctour of physik

**T**her was as tellyth titus luyus  
A knyght that clepid was Virginius  
Fulfilled of honour & of worthynes  
And swonge of frendys and of ryces  
A doughter had this knyght by his wyf  
No children had he mo in al his lyf  
Fayr was this mayde of excellent beaute  
Abouen euery wyghte that men myght see  
For nature hath with souereyn dyligence  
Fourmed her in so grette excellence  
As though she wolde say to nature  
Thus can I fourme and peynt a creature  
Whan that me list who can me counterfete  
Pigmalion not though he forge and bete  
Or graue or peynt for I dar wel seyn

## The Tale of the doctour of physyk

Appelles zanzis sholde wiche in keyn  
To graue or paynte or forge or lere  
If they presumyd me to counterfete  
For he that is the fourmour pryncpal  
Hath maad me his Vicar general  
To fourme & paynte erthly creatures  
Right as me list for al thyng in my cure is  
Under the mone that may wane and wexe  
And for my werk no thyng wol I age  
My lorde and I be fully of accorde  
I made here to the worshyp of my lorde  
So do I al myn other creatures  
Of what colours they be or what figures  
Thus semyth me that nature wolde seye  
This mayde was of yu yere age and thre  
In which that nature had such deyt  
For right as he can paynte a lyly whyt  
And rody as a rose with such paynture  
She payntid hath this nobyl creature  
Er she was born vpon he: lympe fre  
Where as by right such colouris shold be  
And plibus died had her tressis grette  
Lyke to the sermpe of his burnyd lere  
And yf that excellent was her beaute  
A thousand fold more vertuous was she  
In her ne lackith no condiaon  
That is to prync as by discreaon  
As wel in body as ghoost chise was she  
For which she flourid in virgynyte  
With al humylite and abstepnence  
With al atemperaunce and paience  
With mesure eke and leryng of aray  
Discrete she was in answerynge alwey  
She was as wysse as pallas dar I sern  
Her fraunde eke ful womanly and pleyne  
None counterfetid teryms had she  
To seme wysse but after her degre  
She spake & al her wordes more and les

The tale of the doctour of physyk

Solbnyng in vertu and in gentilnes  
Shamefast she was in maydens shamefastnes  
Constant in herte and euer in besynes  
To dryue her out of ydle shogardye  
Vacus had of her mouth no maisterye  
For wyne & pougthe doth Venus entree  
As men in fyre wyl cast oyle or grace  
And of her olben vertu unconsewred  
She hath ful ofte tymes her syke fenydy  
For that she wold fle the companye  
Wher likly was to tete of foly  
As is at festis reuelles and dauncis  
That ben occasiōs of daunaunce  
Such thyngis make chylde for to be  
To sone rypp and bolde as men may see  
Whiche is ful parbous and hath be yore  
For al to sone may she lerne lore  
Of boldnes when she is wexen a wyf  
And ye maistressys in your olde lyf  
That lordis doughtis haue in gouernaunce  
He takith of my wordis no displeaunce  
I thynke that ye ben set in gouernynge  
Of lordis doughters only for thio thyngis  
Eythir for ye haue kept your honeste  
Or ellis ye haue fallen in frelde  
And knowe wel ynow the olde daunce  
And han forsake fully myschaunce  
For euermore / therfore for cristys sake  
To teche hem vertu like that ye not flake  
A theef of kynson that hath forlaste  
His acoursnesse & al his olde crafte  
Can kepe a forst best of ony man  
Nolth kepe hem wel for and ye wyl ye can  
Loketh wel to no wyse that ye assente  
Lest ye dampnydy be for your euyl entente  
For who so doth a treptur is certeyn  
And takith hede of that I shal seyn  
Of al treson souerayn pestilence

## The Tale of the doctour of physyk

Ye when a wyght betrayeth Innocence  
Ye fadir & ye modris eke also  
Thugh ye haue chyl dren be it one or moo  
Pour is the charge of al her surueyaunce  
Whiles they ken vnder pour gouernaunce  
We waar yt by ensaumplis of pour lypunge  
Or by pour negligenc in chastyspunge  
That they ne perysch for I dar wel seye  
If that they do ye shul it dre akye  
Vnder a shepheard softe & neglygent  
The wolfe hath many a sheep & lambe to rent  
Suffisith ensaumplis y nold as lere  
For I must turne ayen to my matere  
This mayde of whiche I telle expres  
She kepte her self she neddyd no maysters  
For in her lypunge maydens myght rede  
As in a booke euery good word in dre  
That longyth to a mayde vertuous  
She was so prudent & so bounteous  
For whiche the fame out sprong on euery syde  
Woth of her bounte & of her beaute wyde  
That thorow the bond they prepsen hir echone  
That buedy vertu saue enure alone  
That sorp is of other mennys weel  
And glad is of his sorow and vnkele  
This doctour makith this discription  
This mayde on a day went in to the towne  
Toward the tempyl with her moder dre  
As is of yonge maydens the manere  
Nold was ther a iustice in the towne  
That gouernour was of that regyoun  
And so kepyl this iuge his eyen casie  
Op on this mayde auyfynge her ful faste  
As she cam forth by there the iuge stood  
Anone his herte chaungyd and his moode  
So was he caught with beaute of this mayde  
And to hym self ful pryncyply he sayde  
This mayde shal be myn for ony man

## The tale of the doctour of physyk

Anone the fendy in to his herte ran  
And taughte hym sodenly by what sleighte  
The mayden to his purpos wynnne he myghte  
For certes by no force ne by no mede  
Hym thought he was not abyll for to spede  
For she was stronge of frendis and eke she  
Confermyd was in such souereyn beaute  
That wel he wiste he myght hir not wynnne  
As for to make her with her body to synne  
For whiche with grete despayracon  
He sent after a chorle was in the town  
The whiche he knew ful subtil and ful holde  
This iuge vnto this chorle this tale hath tolde  
In secret wyse and made hym to assure  
He sholdy telle it to no creature  
And yf he dede he sholdy lese his lode  
When assentid was this cursid dede  
Glad was the iuge & made glady chere  
And gaf hym yftras precious andy dore  
When shapen was al this conspirasye  
From wynt to wynt hold that his lecherye  
Parfourmyd sholdy he ful subtilly  
As ye shullyn here it after openly  
Hoom goon this chorle that highte claudius  
This fals iuge that highte apius  
So was his name for it is no fabyll  
But knowen for an historial thyng notabyll  
The sentence of it soth is out of doute  
This fals iuge goth now faste aboute  
To hastyn his delyte alle that he may  
And so trefyl sone after on a day  
This fals iuge as tellyth is the storie  
As he was wont sat in his consistorye  
And gaf his domys vpon sondry caas  
This fals chorle cam forth a ful grete paas  
And sayde lord yf it be your wyll  
As doth me right vpon my vyuous bylle  
In whiche I pleyne vpon my virginite

## The Tale of the doctour of physyk

And yf he wyl sey it is not thus  
I wyl proue it and fynde good wytnes  
That soth is that my byll wol expre  
The Juge answeryd of this in his absencc  
I may not geue diffynyte sentence  
Lette do calle hym & I wol gladly here  
Thou shalt haue right & no wronge here  
Virginius cam to here the Justices wyll  
And right anone was red this cursyd bill  
The sentence was therof as ye shul here  
To you my lord Appius so dere  
Stywith your youre seruaunt Claudius  
Hold that a knyght calld Virginius  
Aynst the lalbe & aynst al equitye  
Holdith expre aynst the wyll of me  
My seruaunt which that is my thralle by right  
Which from myn hous was stolyn on an nyght  
Whiche he was ful yonge I wol it proue  
By wytnes lord so that ye not greue  
Ske nys not his doughter what so he say  
Wherefore my lord Justice I you pray  
Pelde me my thral yf it be your wyll  
So this was al the sentence of his bylle  
Virginius gan vpon the chorde beholde  
But hastily or he his tale tolde  
He wolde defendid it as shold a knyght  
And by wytnes of many a frelde wyght  
That al was fals that sayde his aduersary  
This cursyd Juge wolde no lenger tary  
He here a word more of Virginius  
But pas his judgement & sayd thus  
I deme anone this chorde his seruaunt haue  
Thou shalt no lenger in thy hous her saue  
Go fet her forth & put her in our garde  
This chorde shal haue his thral thus I a garde  
And when this worthy knyght Virginius  
Thowld sentence of the Juge apius  
Must by force his dere doughter reyn

## The tale of the doctour of physyk

Comto the iuge in lechery to luygh  
 He goth hym boom & set hym in his halle  
 And lete anone his dere doughter calle  
 And with a face dede as as this colde  
 Up on her humbly face he gan beholde  
 With faders pitte stickyng thorow his herte  
 Al wol he not from his purpos conuerte  
 Doughter quod he Virginea by thy name  
 Eter ben elbo wepps other deth or shame  
 That thou must suffre alas that I was fore  
 For neuer thou deseruest wherfore  
 To dien with a slyerde or with a knyf  
 O dere doughter which that al my lyf  
 I haue fosterid vp with such plesaunce  
 That thou ne were out of my remembraunce  
 O doughter which that art my last wo  
 And in my lif my laste iow also  
 O gemme of chastyte in pacience  
 Take thou thy deth for this is my sentence  
 For loue & not for hate thou must be dede  
 My pytous hond must smyte of thy hed  
 Alas that euer apur the say  
 Thus hath he juged the to day  
 And tolde her all the cas as ye before  
 Haue herd it nedyth to telle no more  
 O mercy dere fader quod the mayde  
 And with that word she both her armys leyde  
 Aboute his necke as she was wont to do  
 The tere brast out of her eyen elbo  
 And sayd good fader shalle I dye  
 Is ther no grace is ther no remedye  
 No cras dere doughter myn quod he  
 Than yeue me leysur fader myn quod she  
 My deth to compleyne a litil space  
 For parde I praye pas his doughter grace  
 For to compleyne or he her sellw alas  
 And god it woote no thyng was her trespas  
 But that she can her fader for to see

## The Tale of the doctour of physyk

To welcome hym with grete solempnyte  
And with that worde she fpl a sboune anoon  
And after whan her sbouuynge was a goon  
She risith vp and to her fader sayde  
Blessyd be god that I shal dye a mayde  
Yef me my deth or that I haue a shame  
Doth with your child your wil a goddis name  
And with that worde she prayeth ful ofte  
That with his sberde he shold smyte softe  
And with that worde a sboune down she fpl  
Her fader with sorowful herte and wyl  
Her hedy of smote and by the top it hent  
And to the Juge he gaf it in present  
As he sat yet in dome in consistory  
Whan that the Juge it salu as saith the story  
He had take hym & hange hym al so faste  
But right anone al the peple in thraste  
To saue the knyght for routhe and for pyte  
For knolwen was the fals miquyte  
The peple anone had suspect in this thyng  
By maner of this chorlis chalengynge  
That it was by assent of apuris  
They wyse wel that he was lecherous  
Forthwylth vnto this apuris they goon  
And cast hym in prison and that anon  
Where as he stoll hym self and Claudius  
That seruaunt was vnto thys apuris  
Was demyd for to be hongyd vpon a tre  
But Virginius of his grete pyte  
So prayde for hym that he was exchyd  
And ellis certis kyd he be begyd  
The remenaunt were hongyd both more & lesse  
That consentyd were to this cursidnes  
Here may men see how synne hath his merite  
We were for noman boot how god wol smyte  
In no degre ne in no maner wyse  
The worm of conscience may ynowgh agryse  
Of wicked lyp though it so pryuy be

## The Prologue

That no man boote of but god and he  
Whethyr that he be lelde man or leryd  
He noot how sone he may be a ferid  
Therefore I rede yow this counceyl take  
For sake synne or synne you forsake

Here endyth the phisicians tale /

And here begynneth the wordes  
Of the Hoost

**O**ur hoost gan sware as he lere boode  
Harold and he by naylis and by blood  
This was a fals thef a cursid Justyse  
As shameful deth as herte can deuyse  
Come to this fals juges & her aduocates  
Alas this sely mayde is sleyn alas  
Alas to dere a boughte she her beaute  
Wherefore I say that al men mow see  
That pestes of fortune and of nature  
Ben cause of deth of many a creature  
Her beaute was her deth I dar wel sayn  
Alas so pytously as she was slayn  
But here of wol I not procede as now  
Men haue ful ofte more harme than now  
But truly myn olde maister dere  
This is a pitous tale for to here  
But netheles passe ouer is no force  
I pray to god so saue thy gentil corps  
And thy vrynals and thy iourdens  
Thyn pocras & thy gahens  
And euery boyst ful of letuary  
God blisse hem & our lady saynt mary  
So mote I the thou art a propir man  
And like a prelat by saynt dampan  
Thou hast spoke ynough I can not sey in terme

## The Prologue

But wel I wote thou makist my herte to erne  
That I almoste haue caught a cardiall  
By corpus dominus but yf I haue triakyl  
Or ellys a draughte of corny moysty ale  
Or but I haue anon a mery tale  
My herte is best for pyte of this mayde  
Thou belamp thou John pardonere he sayde  
Tel vs sum myrthys or jappys right anon  
It shal be do he sayde by seynt Runyon  
But first quod he here at this ale stake  
I wyl tothe drynke and ete of a Cake  
But right anone thys gentils began to crye  
May let hym telle vs of no rebaudrye  
Tel vs sum moral thyng that we molde here  
Som wyte & than wol we gladly here  
I graunte ylys quod he but I must thynke  
Wp on sum honest thyng whiche that I drynke

Here endeth the wordes of the host

And begynneth the pardoners prologue

**I** Ordynge qd he in churche when I preche  
I praye me to haue an haunter speche  
And ryng it out as wounde as goth a kelle  
For I can by rote al that I telle  
My tyme is euer one and allway was  
Radix malorum est cupiditas  
First I pronounce wdens that I come  
And than my bikkis shelve I al & somme  
Our hege lordis seal on my patent  
That shelve I first my body to waient  
That no man be so bolde ne preste ne clerk  
Me to distourbe of cristis holy werk  
And after that telle I forth my talis  
Bullis of popis and of cardynalis  
Of patriarkis & bishoppis I shelve  
And in latyn I speke wordes a felwe

## The Prologue

To fassron with my predycacion  
And for to sterc men to deuocion  
Thenne shelve I forth my longe cristal stonys  
I crammyd in choutis ful of sonys  
Repykes they ben as wenen they echon  
Than haue I in lawe a sholder boon  
Whiche that was of an holy ielvis sipe  
Good men say I take of my wordes keep  
If that this boon be wastre in ony welles  
Of hool or calf sheep or oxe swelle  
That ony worm hath ete or hym stonge  
Take water of this welles & wastre his tunge  
And it is hool anon / and ferthermore  
Of pockis & of scabbis and euery sore  
Shal euery sheep be hool that of this welles  
Drynketh a draughte take kepe of that I telle  
Of that the good man that the bestys olbeth  
Wol euery welles or that the cok crolbeth  
Fastyng drynke of this welles a draughte  
As that holy ielbe our elders taughte  
His bestys & his stoor shal multiplye  
And sirys also it killeth ielousie  
And though a man be falle in gelous rage  
Let make with this water his potage  
And neuer shal he more his wyf mistruste  
Though he in soth the defaute by her wyfste  
Al had she take prestys tibo or thre  
Here is a metayn eke that ye may see  
He that his hond wol put in that metayn  
He shal haue multiplyng of his greyn  
Whan he hath solven be it whete or oys  
So that he offre pene or ellys grotis  
Good men & women o thyng warne I yoll  
If ony wyght be in this churche noll  
That hath don synne so orryble that he  
Dar not for shame shryuen be  
Or ony woman be she yonge or olde  
That hath y maad her husbond Cokeolde

## The Prologue

Suche folke shal haue no polver ne grace  
To offir to my relikes in this place  
And who so fyndeth hym out of suche blame  
Comyth vp and offyr in goddis name  
And I assople hem by the auctoryte  
Suche as by bull was grauntid to me  
By this gaude haue I wonne many a peer  
An hundred mark syn I was pardoner  
I stonde lyke a clerke in my pulpet  
And whan lewd pepyl be down y set  
I preche so as ye haue herd before  
And telle an hundred fals Japis more  
Than payne I me to stretch forth myn necke  
And est and west vpon the pepyl I keche  
As doth a dolbeue sittynge vpon a berne  
Myn hondis and my tunge goon so perne  
That it is ioye to see my besynes  
Of auarice and of suche cursidnes  
Is al my prechyng to make hem fre  
To geue her pens and namely vnto me  
For myn entent is not but for to bypne  
And nothyng for correction of synne  
I reche not when that they be berred  
Though her soules goon a blakeberied  
For certes ful many a predition  
Solwynth ofte tyme of euyl entencion  
Somme for plesaunce of folk and for flaterye  
To tenauntyd by pporisie  
And som for keyngdome & som for hate  
For when I dar not other liues delate  
Than wol I syngge hem with my tonge smerte  
In prechyng so that they shul not aserte  
To ten diffamed falsly yf that be  
Hath trespassid othir to my bretheryn or me  
For though I telle not his proper name  
Men shal wel knowe that it is the same  
By sygnes or by other circumstauncis  
Thus quyte I folke that doth be displeauncis

## The Prologue

Thus spyt I out my venym vnder helbe  
Of holynes to seme holy and trelbe  
But shortly myn entent I wol deuyse  
I preche of no thyng but of couetyse  
Therefore my tyme is yet and euer was  
Radix omnium malorum est cupiditas  
Thus gan I preche the same wyse  
To such as be vsyng the synne of auarice  
But though my self be gilty in that synne  
Yet can I make other folke to abygne  
From auarice / & fore hem to repente  
But that is not my pryncypal entente  
I preche no thyng but for couetyse  
Of this mater it ought y nold suffyse  
Than telle I hem ensauynghis many oon  
Of olde stories longe tyme agoon  
For leldy wyll louyn talis olde  
Whiche thyngis can they weel reporte & holde  
What trolb y whilis thit I may preche  
And for to abygne gold & siluer for to teche  
That I wyll lyue in pouert wyllfully  
Nay nay I thought it neuer trelbly  
For I wol preche & begge in sondry londis  
I wil not doo no labour with my hondis  
Ne maken bushettis & lye ther y  
By cause I wol not begge idelly  
I wyll none of the apostelis countrefete  
I wyll haue money / bulle chese and wyte  
Al were it geuen of the pourest page  
Or of the pourest wyddow in a village  
Al shold her children sterue for famyn  
Nay I wol drynke the flour of the syn  
And haue a joly benche in euery town  
But herkenyth lordyngis in conclusoun  
Your lykynge is that I shal telle a tale  
Nold I haue dronke a draughte of corny ale  
By god I hope I shal telle you a thyng  
That shal by reson be at your lykynge

## The tale of the Pardoner

For though my self be a ful vicious man  
A morike tale yet I you telle can  
Whiche I am wont for to preche and also wyne  
Now holde your pees my tale I wol begynne

Here endyth the prologue  
Of the Pardoner



And begynneth the Tale

**I**n Flaundris sumtyme was a compaignie  
Of yonge folke that haunteden folye  
As riot hazard, Schalys and tauernes  
Where as byschurpes lutes and gyternes  
They daunce and pleye at the dyce both day & nyght  
And etyn also & drynkyn aboue her myght  
Therow which they doen the deupl sacrifice

## The tale of the Pardoner

With ynn the deupls temple in cursid wyse  
The superfluites abhominabyl  
Her othys he so grete & so dampnabyl  
That it is gassy for to here hem slybere  
Our blissyd lordis body they to here  
Hem thought the jellys wente hym not ynough  
And eche of hem at othez synne lough  
And right anone cam in the tymblescheris  
Fetis and smale and yong frutescheris  
Syngars with harppes Walldis wastenis  
Such as ben very the deuplis offycaris  
To kyndyl & blowe the fire of lechery  
That is annexyd into gyltynge  
The holy writte take I to wytnesse  
That lechery is in wyne and in dronkenesse  
So hold that dronken both unkyndely  
Lay by his doughtis also unbetynghly  
So dronke he was he nyte what he wrought  
And therfore sore repente hym ought  
Herodias who so wol the storyes seeke  
There may ye lerne & by ensaumple teche  
Whan he of wyne was repleet at his feste  
Right at his owen tabyl gaf his beste  
To see the baptist john ful gylteles  
Senek saith eke good wordis doutles  
He sayth he can no differens fynde  
Betwyx a man that is oute of his mynde  
And a man whiche that is dronkelely  
But that woodnes fallyn is in a shew  
Perseuerith longer than doth dronkenes  
Out gyltynge ful of cursidnes  
O cause first of our confusyon  
O original synne of our dampnacion  
Eyl crist had thought he with his blood ageyn  
To hold us shortly for to seyn  
A thought was this cursid synne  
Corrupt was al this world thorow gyltynge  
Adam our fory fader and his wyf also

## The Tale of the Pardoner

From paradys to labour and to woo  
Were dryuen for that vice it is no drede  
For whiche that Adam fastyd as I rede  
He was in paradise & whan that he  
Ete of the fruyt defendyd on the tre  
Anon he was out cast to woo and pyne  
O glotony on the oughte be wel to pleyne  
O wyfste a man holb many maladies  
Foolwen of excessse and of glotonys  
He shold be the more mesurable  
Of his diete sittynge at his tabyl  
Alas the sypre throte the andyr mouth  
Makyth that est & west north and south  
In erthe in eyr in watir men to synke  
To gete a gloton derynt mete and drynke  
O wile of this matter wel canst thou entere  
Mete into wombe & wombe eke into mete  
Shal god destroyen bothe as wile sayth  
Alas a foul thyng it is by my feyth  
To say this worde & fouler is the dede  
When men so drynketh of the whyte & rede  
That of his throte he makyth his pryue  
Thorow that cursyd superfluyte  
The apostyl wepyng sayth ful pytously  
That walkyn meny of whiche you told haue I  
I say it nold wepyng wyth pitous vois  
That they ben enemyes of cristys croys  
Of whiche the ende is deth worke is her god  
O wombe o hely o synkyng cod  
Fulfilled of dunge and of corrupcion  
At eyther ende of the foul is the soun  
Holt grete cest & labour is the to fynde  
Thyse cookeis holb they stampe sycyne & grynde  
And turne sustaunce in to accident  
To fulfille al thyr licorous talent  
Out of the harde bones knockyn they  
The mary for they casse naught alwey  
That may go thorow the golet softe and softe

## The tale of the Pardoner

Of spyery of leys birk and rote  
Shal he his saule y made by delyte  
To make hym yet a nelber appetyte  
But certes he that haunteth such delais  
Is dede whilis that he luyth in the bias  
A lecherous thyng is wyne and dronkenesse  
Is ful of stryving and of wretchydnesse  
O dronken man diffigured in thy face  
Sour is thy breth foul art thou to embrace  
And thowth thy droghyn nose solbnyth thy soun  
As thowgh thou saydist ay sampson sampson  
And yet god wot sampson drank neuer no wyne  
Thou fallist as it were a styckyd slyn  
Thy tonge is lost and al thy honest cure  
For dronkenes is very sepulture  
Of mannes wyt and his discrecion  
In whom that drynke hath domynacion  
He can no counsel kepe it is no drede  
Nolw kepe you fro the whyte & fro the rede  
Namely fro the whyte wyne of lepe  
That is to selle in bridge strete or in chepe  
Thys wyne of spayn crepyth subtilly  
In other wyngs grolbyng fast by  
Of whiche ther riseth such fumosite  
That when a man hath dronke draughtis thre  
And wenyth that he be at home in chepe  
He is in spayne right at the town of lepe  
Not at rochel ne at bordou town  
And than wol he say sampson sampson  
But herkenyth wordyngs o word I you pray  
That al the souereyn actys dar I say  
Of victories in the olde testament  
Thow very god that is omnyppotent  
Were doon in abstynence and in prayer  
Lokyth the bibyl and there ye molbe it lere  
Lokyth attilla the grete conquerour  
Deyed in hie slepe with shame and dishonour  
Bledyng ay at his nose in dronkenes

## The Tale of the Pardoner

A capteyn sholdy lyue in sobyenes  
 And ouer al this aypse you right weel  
 What was commaunded? Vnto samuel  
 Not samuel but lamuel say I  
 Redith the bybyl andy fynde it expresly  
 Of wyne peupnge to hem that haue justyce  
 Nomore of this for it may wel suffyse

**A**ndy nold that I haue spoke of gyltonye  
 Nold wol I defende you hasardye  
 Hasardye is very moder of lesyngys  
 Andy of dysceyt andy cursid? forslberyng is  
 Blasphemye of crist manslaughtre & waste also  
 Of catel & of tyme & fethermo  
 It is reproof & contrary of honour  
 For to be holden a comune hasardour  
 And euer the hyer that he is in estat  
 The more he is holden desolate  
 If that a prync? be hasardye  
 In al gouernaunce & al polycy  
 He is as by comune oppynyon  
 To holde the lasse in reputacion  
 Stillebon? that was holde a wyse embassadour  
 Was sent in to Corynthe wth grette honour  
 For to make hem assaunce  
 Andy when he cam hym happid? this chaunce  
 That al the gretteste that were of that londe  
 Pleyngge atte hasarde he hem fonde  
 For whiche as sone as that it myghte be  
 He scale hym hoorn apen to his contrie  
 Andy sayde there wyl I not lese my name  
 I wol not take on me so grette defame  
 You for to alye to noon hasardouris  
 Sendith other wyse ambassadouris  
 For by my trouthe me were leuer dre  
 Than I you to hasardouris sholde alye  
 For ye that ben so glorious in honouris  
 Schal not a lye you to no hasardouris

## The tale of the Pardoner

As by my wyllle ne as by my trette  
This wyse phylosophir thus sayde he  
Loke eke how to the kynge demetrous  
The kynge of parthes as the boke sayth he  
Sente hym a pyre of dysse of gold in scorn  
For he had used hasardre ther befor  
For which he held his glorie and his renoun  
At no value or reputacioun  
Lordis myghten fynde othir maner pley  
Honest ynough to dryue the day alwey

**N**ow wol I speke of othis fals & grette  
A word or twa as many bokes tette  
Grette slyberyng is thyng abhomyable  
And fals slyberyng is a thyng more reprouable  
The high god forbidd slyberyng at all  
Witnes of Mathew but in special  
Of slyberyng sayth holy Jerome  
Thou shalt slybere soth thy othis & not lye  
And slybere in dome & in rightwysnes  
But ydol slyberyng is a cursidnes  
Behold & see that in the first table  
Of high goddis bestis honourable  
How that the second best of hym is this  
Take not myn name in ydilnes amys  
So rather he forbedith such slyberyng  
Than homyde or any other cursid thyng  
I say as by ordre thus it stondyth  
This knoweth they that his bestis vnderstodyth  
How that the second best of god is that  
And furthermore I wyll the telle at plat  
That vengeance shal not parte from the hous  
That of his othis is to outrageous  
By by goddis precious kerte & by his narlis  
And by the blood of crist that is in barlis  
Seuyn is my chauce and thyng is synke & tresp  
By goddis armys yf thou falsly pley  
This dagger shal thorow thyng kerte goo

## The Tale of the Pardoner

This fruyt comyth of the bitches bones two  
Forberyngge tre falsnes and homicide  
Now for the loue of crist that for vs dyde  
Leuyth your othes bothe grette and smale  
For cristys sake and herkenyth my tale  
Thyse ypotours thre of which I telle  
Longe or to pryme were wonge ony telle  
Were set hem in a tauerne to drynke  
And as they sat they herde a belle clynke  
Before a cors was carped to his graue  
That one of hem gan calle to his knaue  
Go let quod he and aye redily  
What cors is this that passith forth by  
And loke that thou reporte his name wel  
Syr qd the boy it nedyth neuer a deel  
It was me tolde or ye cam hre two hours  
He was parde an old feble of hours  
Al sodenly was he sleyn to nyght  
For dronke as he sat on his benche vpright  
Ther cam a pryue theef men clepe deth  
That in this contree al the peple sleeth  
And with his spere he smote his herte in two  
And wente his wey with oute wordis mo  
He hath a thousand sleyn this pestelence  
And mayster er ye come in his presence  
Me thynkith it were necessary  
For to be waar of such an aduersary  
Deth is redy for to mete hym euermore  
Thus taught me my dame I say nomore  
O saynt mary sayd this tauerne  
The child sayth soth for he hath this yere  
Hens ouer a myle sleyn in a grette village  
Bothe man & woman child hyne and page  
A trolbe his habytacion he there  
To ben auyfid grette bysedom it were  
Er that he dyd a man a dishonour  
Pe goddis armys sayde this notour  
Is it such peril with hym for to mete

## The tale of the Pardoner

I ſhal hym ſeke by weye & eke by ſtrete  
I ſhal hym ſe by goddis digne ſonys  
Herkyne felowys be thre been al onys  
Let eche of vs becomyn othris brother  
And eche of vs holde vp his hond to other  
And be wol ſe this tynptour deth  
He ſhal be ſlayn he that ſo many ſleeth  
By goddis dignyte or it be nyght  
To godis haue thyſe thre ſer trowthis plight  
To lyue and dye yllke of theym with othir  
As though he were his olwen ſorn brother  
And vp they ſtert al dronke in this rage  
And forth they goon towarde that village  
Of which the tauerne hath ſpoke befor  
And many a griſly oth haue they ſworn  
And caſtis bliſſid body they to rent  
Deth ſhal be ded yf that be may hym ſente  
When they haue goon not fully a myle  
Right as they wolde haue goon ouer a ſyle  
An old man and a poure with hem met  
This olde man ful mekely hem grette  
And ſayde thus lordyngis god you ſee  
The proudeſt of thiſe riotours thre  
Anſwerde what chorde wyth hardy grace  
Why art thou al forlorryd ſaue thy face  
Why liuſt thou ſo longe in ſo grette age  
This olde man gan ſoke in her viſage  
And ſayde thus for I can not fynde  
A man though I walke in to ynde  
Neither in cyte ne in village  
That wol chaunge his pougthe for myn age  
And therfore muſte I haue myn age ſtille  
As longe tyme as it is goddis wyll  
He deth alas wol not haue my lyf  
Thus walke I lyke a reſteleſ captyf  
And on the grounde which is my modris gate  
I knocke with my ſtaf erly and late  
And ſay to her leue modir let me yn

## The Tale of the Pardoner

To holb I kanyssh flessch blood and skyn  
Allas whan shal my bones be at rest  
Modir with you wolde I chaunge my chyst  
That in my chambyr longe tyme hath be  
Ye for an heir chout to wrappe ynn me  
But yet to me she wol not do that grace  
For which ful pale & wretched is my face  
And seris to you it is no curtesye  
To speke to an olde man by honye  
But he trespassse othyr in word or in dede  
Ye may pour self in holy writ rede  
Apenst an olde man hore by on his heed  
Ye sholde arys wterfore I you rede  
He doth to none olde man harm nold  
No more than ye wolde men dyd to yold  
In age yf ye shold longe abyde  
And god be wyth you wher ye go or ryde  
I muste go thider as I haue to do  
May olde churle by god thou shalt not so  
Seyde this othe hasardour anon  
Thou partist not so lightly by sernt John  
Thou spakist right nold of that trepoure with  
That in this contree al our frendis sleth  
Haue here my trouthe thou art his aspre  
Tel wher he is or thou shalt it abyde  
By god & by the holy sacrament  
For shortly thou art one of his assent  
To sle vs yonge folk thou fals theef  
Nold seris qd he yf that it be to you leef  
To fynde deth turne by this crokid wey  
For in that groue I hym sal last by my fey  
Under a tre & there he wol abyde  
For your hoost he wyl no thyng hym hyde  
Se ye that oke right there ye shul hym fynde  
God saue you that boughte agayn mankynde  
And you amende thus sayde this olde man  
And euery of thise ryotours can  
Tyl they cam to the tre & there they founde

## The Tale of the Pardoner

Of floreyne fyn golde I copned rounde  
Wel ny an eyghte suffyllis as hem thoughte  
No longer than after deth they soughte  
But eke of theyn so glady was of that sighte  
For that the floreyne so fair were and brighte  
That down they sat by the precious horde  
The worst of hem he spake the first worde  
Bretheryn ad he take heere what I saye  
My wyte is greet though I fourde and pleye  
This tresour hath fortune vnto vs geuyn  
In myrthe & iolite our lyf to luyne  
And lightly as it comyth so wol we spende  
By goddis precious dignyte who wende  
To day that we shulde haue so fayr a grace  
But myght this golde be carryd fro this place  
Hoom to my hous or ellis vnto yours  
Than myght we say that it were al ours  
I han were we in hygh felicitye  
But trewly by day it may not be  
Men wolde say that we were theys stronge  
And for our olben tresour don vs longe  
This tresour must be carryd by nyghte  
As wisely and as slyly as it myghte  
Wherefore I rede let boke amonge vs alle  
Draw cut let see where that it wyl falle  
He that hath the shortest cut with herte blythe  
Shal renne to toun & that ful swithe  
To brynge vs hede & wyne ful pryuelly  
And tbo of vs shal kepe ful subtilly  
This tresour wel & yf he wol not tarye  
Whan it is nyght we wol this tresour carye  
By one assent where as vs list best  
That one of hem broughthe swalbe in his nest  
And had he draw & boke on who it wold falle  
And it fyl on the pongest of hem alle  
And forth towarde the toun he wente anone  
And al so sone as he was gone  
That one of hem spake thus vnto that othir

## The tale of the Pardoner

Thou wotest wel thou art my sworn brother  
Thy profit wol I telle the right anon  
Thou wotest wel that our felow is goon  
And here is gold & that ful greet plenty  
That shal be departid among us thre  
But netheles yf I can shewe it so  
That it departid were among us thre  
Had I not doon a frendis turn to the  
That othir answerde I note how it myght be  
I wot wel the gold shal be ouris thre  
What shul we say what shul we do  
Shal it be counceyl sayd the firste shal be  
And I shal telle the in wordis false  
What we shul do and crynge it wel aboute  
I graunte quod that othir out of doute  
That by my trouthe I wol the not l. n. n. n.  
Now quod he thou wotest wel we be thre  
And thre of us shal stronger be than one  
Loke when that he is set thou right anone  
A rise as though thou woldist with hym playe  
And I shal ryue hym thorough the sides thre  
Whiche thou sergest with hym in game  
And with thy dagger loke thou do the same  
And than shal al this gold departid be  
My dere frende betwixte me and the  
Than may we sothe our lustes fu fille  
And playe atte dyse right at our elven wyke  
And thus accorded be thise thre l. n. n.  
To se the thridde as ye have herd me seye  
This pongest which that wente to the town  
Ful ofte in herte he wold yf by and down  
The beaute of thise foreyns nelke and fright  
O lord quod he yf so were that I myght  
Al this tresour wyne to my self as ne  
There nys no man that kuyth under trewe  
Of god that shold be true as mery as I  
And atte last the fende our enemy  
Put in his herte that he shold possen here

## The Tale of the Pardoner

With which he myght sle his felowis thre  
For why the fende fond hym in such a ruyne  
That he had leue hym in sorow to brynge  
For this was vicerly his entent  
To sle hem bothe & neuer to repent  
And forth he goth no lenger wolde he tary  
In to the town vnto a potter  
And prayde hym that he wolde hym selle  
Som poison that he myght his rathe quelle  
And eke therewith was a polcat in his halbe  
That as he sayde his capons had slalbe  
And sayde he wolde breke hem yf he myghte  
Of vermyen that destroyde hem by nyghte  
The potter answered thou shalt haue  
A thyng as wysly god my soule saue  
In al this worlde there is no creature  
That etyn or drynkyn hath of this confection  
Not but the mountenance of a corn of wheat  
That he ne shal anon his lyf forlete  
Ye sterue he shal and that in lasse whyle  
Or thou wolt goo passynge half a myle  
This poison is so stronge & so violent  
This cursid man hath in his hond it sent  
This poison in a bove & sith he ran  
In to the nexte strete vnto a man  
And bowlypde hym large botellis thre  
And in to the threyn the poison pourid he  
The thridde he kepte cleue for his drynke  
For al nyghte he schoop hym for to slaynke  
In carpyng of this gold out of this place  
And when this noyse with sory grace  
Had filled with wyne his grete botellis thre  
To his felowis ayn repayth he  
What nedith it to sermone of it more  
For right as they had cast his deth afore  
Right so they haue hym sleyn right anone  
And when this was doon than spak that one  
Now let vs sitte & drynke and make vs mery

## The tale of the Pardoner

And afterward he wyl his body keep  
And afterward it happid hem per caas  
To take the hotel there the poppon was  
And drank and yaf his felow drynke also  
For whiche anon they steruyn bothe ilbo  
But wrotes I suppose that Auianne  
Wroot neuer in no canoun ne in no fenne  
More wonder forowdis of enpopsonynge  
Then had thise wretchis ilbo in her endynge  
Thus endid he thise homicides ilbo  
And eke the fals enpopsoner also  
O cursid spynne ful of cursidnes  
O traptoure homicide o wickednes  
O glotony o luxury o hasardrye  
Thou blasphemar of crist wylth vilonye  
And othes grete of Usage and of pryde  
Alas mankynde how may it fetyde  
That to thy creatour whiche that the brought  
And with his precyous blood the bought  
Thou art so false & so vnkynde alas  
Noll good men god foryeue you your trespass  
And warte you from the synne of auarice  
My holy pardoun may you alle warite  
So that ye offyr nobylis or sterlyngys  
Or ellis siluer sponys frochis or ryngys  
Wolwylth your freed vnder thise holy bullis  
Compith by ye wyllys offith of your wollys  
Your names I entre in my rolle anon  
In to the blisse of heuyn shal ye goon  
I you assoyle by my high polver  
You that wol offre as clene & as cleer  
As ye were sore to feres thus I preche  
And Iesu crist that is our soules leeche  
So graunte you his pardon to receyue  
For that is best I wyl you not deceyue  
But feris o word forgat I in my tale  
I haue rekies and pardon in my male  
As fair as ony man in Engeland

## The Tale of the Pardoner

Whiche were me yene by the Popis hond  
Yf ony of you wol of deuocioun  
Offryn and haue myn absolucioun  
Comyth forth anon and kneleth here a doun  
And mekely receyuiþ your pardoun  
Or elles takith pardon as ye wende  
Al nelbe & fressh at euery myles ende  
So that ye offir alwey nelbe and nelbe  
Noblis or pens whiche that been good & trewe  
It is an honour to euerych that is here  
That ye mow haue a sufficiant pardonere  
To assolve you in contree as ye ryde  
For auenturis whiche that may letyde  
For perauenture ther may falle one or twe  
Doun of his hors and breke his necke a twe  
Loke whiche a surete it is to you alle  
That I am in your felishyp y falle  
That may assolve you bothe more and lasse  
Whan that the soule shal from the body passe  
I rede that our hoost here shal begynne  
For he is most enuoluped in synne  
Comyth forth sir hoost & offrit right anone  
And thou shalt kisse the relikes euerychone  
Ye for a grette vnwylle anone thy purs  
May nay quod he than haue I cristys cures  
Let he quod he it shal not be so theche  
Thou woldest make me kysse thy n olde breche  
And were it were a relik of a seynt  
Though it were with thy fundement y depeynt  
But by that croc whiche that saynt cleyn fond  
I wold I had thy colions in my hond  
In stede of relikes othir of saintelvary  
Let cutte hem of I wol helpe the hem to carry  
They shul be shryned in an hoggis tord  
This pardoner answerd not o word  
So broth he was he wold no word sey  
Nob quod our hoost I wol no longer pley  
With the ne with noue other angry man

## The tale of the Pardoner

But right anon the worthy knyght began  
When that he sawe that at the p. pl. lough  
Homore of this for it is right ynough  
Syr pardoner be mery & glady of chere  
And y<sup>e</sup> sir host that be to me so dere  
I pray you that y<sup>e</sup> kysse the pardonere  
And y<sup>e</sup> pardoner I pray the dralbe the nere  
And as we dyd let vs laughe and pley  
Anon they kysed and ryden forth for wey

Here endyth the Pardoners Tale



And begynneth the shyppmannys tale

**A** Marchaunt somtyme was at seynt denys  
That tyme was wherfore men selde hym wyse  
A wyf he had of excellent beaute  
And compenable and rich was she

## The Tale of the Shypman

Whiche is a thyng that causith more dispence  
Than worth is al the chere & reuerence  
That men hem doon at festes and at daunsis  
Such salutations and countenauncis  
Passyn as doth a shadow on a balke  
But who is hym that payen must for alle  
The sely husbonde algate he must paye  
He muste be bothe clothe and eke aray  
Al for his olben worshyp ful richely  
In whiche aray he daunsyn jolyly  
And yf that he nought paye perauenture  
Or ellis hys not such spencis endure  
But thynkith it is wasyrd and y lost  
Than must another paye for our cost  
Or lene be golde and that is parbous  
This nobyl marchannt held a nobyl hous  
For whiche he had so grette reyre  
For his largenes & for his wyf was feyr  
That wonder was but herkenyth to my tale  
Amonge al thysse gestes grette and smale  
Ther was a monk a fair man and a bold  
I trolbe that /xxx/ wynter he was old  
That euer in one was dralyng to that place  
This yonge monk that was so fayr of face  
Aquerynted was so with the good man  
Sith that their first knowlege began  
That in his hous as famyler was he  
As it is possyble ony frend to be  
But for asmuche as this good man  
And eke this monk of whiche I began  
Were bothe two born in one village  
The monk hym clapyeth as for cosinage  
And he ayen sayth not onys nay  
But was as gladd therof as foule of day  
For to his herte it was a grette plesaunce  
Thus ben they knyt with etern allpauce  
And eche of hem gan other for to ensure  
Of brotherhede whyle that her lyf may dure

## The tale of the Shypman

For was dan John & namely of dyspence  
As in that hous & ful of dyspence  
To doon plesauur and also gude costage  
He not forpat to geue the leste paye  
In al that hous but after his degre  
He pay the lord and also his meynne  
Whan that he cam sum maner honest thyng  
For which they were as gladd of his comyng  
As foul is sayn whan the sonne by risith  
Nomore of this for hit suffisith  
But so he fyl this marchaunt on a day  
Shoop hym to make redy his aray  
Tolward the town of Bruggis for to fare  
To byn there a portoun of ware  
For which he had to paris sent anon  
A messang. and prayd that dan John  
That he shold come to saynt denys and play  
With hym & his wyf a day or thwere  
Er he to bruggis wente in alle wyse  
This nobyl monk the which I you dyspise  
Hath of his albot as hym list licence  
Why cause he was a man of hygh prudence  
And eke an offyce out for to ryde  
To seker graungis & her for his wyde  
And to saynt denys comyth hym anon  
Who was so welcom as my lord dan John  
Our were cosyn ful of curtesye  
With hym he brought a jub of maluesye  
And eke another ful of fyn bernage  
And solatye as was his blage  
And thus I lette hem ete drynke & pleye  
This marchaunt & this monk a day or thwere  
The thridde day the marchaunt so risith  
And on his nedys sadly hym auryth  
And so to his countirhous goth he  
To rekene with hym self wel may be  
Of that yere how that it with hym stood  
And how that he dyspendyd had his good

## The tale of the Shypman

And yf encreased he had or none  
His bolis & his luggis many one  
He lepeþ before hym on his countyng forde  
Ful rich was his tresour and his hord  
For which ful fast his countour he sette  
And eke he nolde that no man shold hym lette  
Of his accountyng for the mene tyme  
And thus he sat til it was passyd pryme  
Dan John was risen in the morow also  
And in the gardyn walkyd to and fro  
And sayd his thyngis ful coriously  
This good wyf cam walkyng pryuelly  
In to the gardyn there as he walkid softe  
And hym salubd as six hath doon ofte  
A mayde childe cam in her compaignie  
Which as she list she may gouerne and gye  
For yet vnder the yerde was the mayde  
O dere cosyn myn dan John she sayde  
What cyleth you so rathe for to ryse  
Nede qd he it ought ynough suffyse  
I yue ouris to slepe on a nyght  
But it were for an olde pallid wight  
As been thys weddyd men that lyen and dare  
As in a fourme sittith a very bare  
Were al for straught with honds grete & smale  
But were new why loke ye noll so pale  
I trow artis that our good man  
Hath you labourid sith the nyght began  
That you were nede to restyn hastely  
And with that word he lough ful meryly  
And with his olben thought went al weedy  
This fayr wyf gan shake her heed  
And sayd thus ye godd wote al quod she  
May cosyn it stonidith not so with me  
For by that godd that gaf me soule and lyf  
In al the tyme of fraunce is ther no wyf  
That lasse lust hath to that sory pley  
For y may synge alas and wel a wey

## The Tale of the Shypman

That I was born but to no bygght quod the  
Daw I not telle how it stonnyth wyth me  
Wherfore I thynke out of this lond to wende  
Or ellis of my self to make an ende  
So ful am I of drede ande eke of care  
This monk began vpon this wyf to stare  
And sayd alas my new godd forbede  
That ye for ony sorow or for ony drede  
For do your self / but telle me your greif  
Paraventure I may in your myscheif  
Counsel or helpe & therfore tellith me  
Al your annoyre / for it shal secret be  
For on my portwyle here I make an oth  
That neuer in my lyf for leef ne both  
Ne shal I of no counsel you felwre  
The same quod she to you y se  
By godd ande by this portwyle I you swere  
Though men wol me al to woe tre  
Ne shal I neuer for to goo to helpe  
Welwre o word of thyng that ye me telle  
Not for no cosynage / ne affiaunce  
But verily for loue / ande affiaunce  
Thus been they swore & ther vpon they list  
And eke talkith to other what them list  
Cosyn quod she yf that I had space  
As I haue none & namely in this place  
Than wolde I telle a legende of my lyf  
What I haue suffrid syn I was wyf  
With my husbonde al be he your cosyn  
May godd this monk by godd ande saynt martyn  
He is nomore cosyn by to me  
Than is the leef that hangith on the tre  
I depe hym so by saynt denys of fraunce  
To haue the more cause of acquyntaunce  
Of you whom I haue louyd specially  
A boue al other women sirlly  
This swere I you on my professoun  
Ecce with your greif lest he come down

## The tale of the Shypman

And fastith you and goo albey anon  
My dere loue ad she o my dan John  
Ful leef were me this counsel to hyde  
But out it moot it may no lenger abyde  
My husbond is to me the worst man  
That euer was sith the world began  
But sith I am his wyf it sittith not me  
To telle no wyght of our pryuyte  
Neyther in bed ne in none other place  
Gods shilde I sholde it telle for his grace  
A wyf shold not seyn of her husbonds  
But al honour as I can vnderstonde  
Saue vnto you this muchel I telle shal  
As helpe me god he is not worth at al  
In no degree the value of a fere  
But yet me greuyth most his nygardrye  
And wel ye boot that women naturallly  
Desiren thyngis swete as wel as doo I  
They wolde that her husbonds shold be  
Hardy & wyse rich & thereto fre  
And buyum to his wyf & fressh a bedde  
But by that ylle lord that for vs bledde  
For his honour my self for to araye  
A sonday next I muste nedys paye  
An hundred frankis or ellis I am fore  
Yet were I leuer to be vnfore  
Than me were doo disclaunde or vilonye  
And yf my husbond myght it spee  
I nere but lost & therfore I you preye  
Lene me this summe or ellis must I deye  
Dan John I say lene me this /£/ frankis  
Parde I wol not fayne you my thankis  
If that ye list to doo that I you praye  
For at a certeyn day I wol you paye  
And don to you what plesaunce or scrupse  
That I may doon right as ye list deuyse  
And but I do god take on me vengeaunce  
As foul as euer had genyoun of fraunce

## The Tale of the Shypman

This gentil monk ansWerde in this manere  
Nolb treibly myn olven lady dere  
I haue on you quod he so greet a routh  
That I pou sberre and plight my trouthe  
That whan your husbond is to flaundris fare  
I wol despuer you out of this care  
For I wyl brynge you an / E / frankis  
And with þe word he caught her by the shankis  
And her enbraced harde & liste her softe  
Goth nolu pour weye quod he al stille & softe  
And lette be dyne as sone as ye may  
For by my kalander it is pryme of the day  
Goth nolb & leen as treibe as I shal be  
Nou ellis god forbede sit quod she  
And forth she goth as ioly as a ppe  
And ladi the cokis that they shold her  
So that men myghti dyne attre none  
Up to her husbond is this wylf goon  
And knocketh at his countour boldly  
Why is there qd he Petir it am I  
Quod she what sit hold longe wol ye faste  
Hold longe tyme wol ye rekyn and caste  
Pour summys & pour cokis & pour thyngys  
The deupl haue parte of al such rekynngis  
Ye haue ynough parde of goddie sende  
Come down to day & leet your luggis stonde  
Ne be ye not asshamyd that day John  
Shal fastynge al this longe day goon  
What lette be goo here a masse & goo dyne  
Ye qd this man lital canst thou deupne  
The curious bespnes that we haue  
For of be chapmen al so god me saue  
And by that lord that chepyd is saynt Iue  
Scarcely among tibles ten tibelue shal thynue  
Continuelly lastyng vnto theyr age  
We may wel make chere & good bysage  
And dryue forth the world as it may be  
And kepe our astat in pryncipe

## The tale of the Shypman

Thyl we be ded; or ellis that we pleye  
A pilgrymage or goon out of the lye  
And; therfore haue I grete necessyte  
Upon this queynt worlde to auyse me  
For euer more we must stonde in drede  
Of hap & fortune in our chapmanshede  
To fflaundris wol I go to mowle at day  
And; come aghen as sone as euer I may  
For whiche dre wyf I the beseke  
As be to euery wyght buyum and; meke  
And for to kepe our good; be corious  
And; honestly gouerne wel our hous  
Thou hast y nough in euery maner wyse  
That to a thristy houshold; may suffice  
The lackith none away ne no vytayl  
Of siluer in thy purs shalt thou not fayl  
And with that word; his counterdore he shette  
And down he goth he wolde no lenger latte  
But hastily a masse was there sayde  
And; spedly the tablis were leyde  
And; to dynner faste they hem spedde  
And; richely the chapman this monk fedde  
And; after dynner dan john sobirly  
This chapman took a parte properly  
And; said hym thus cosyn it stondyth soo  
That wel I see to bridgis wol ye goo  
God & saynt auleyn spece you and; gyde  
I pray you cosyn wysely thyder ye ryde  
Gouerne you also wel of your diet  
Attamperly and; namelly in this hete  
Betwyxte be tibo nedyth no straunge fare  
Farwel cosyn god; shelde you fro care  
And; yf ony thyng by day or by nyght  
Be in my wolber or in my myght  
That ye me wol commaunde in ony wyse  
Hit shal be doo right as ye wol deuyse  
O thyng or that ye goon yf it may be  
I praye you to lene it vnto me

## The Tale of the Shypman

An hundred frankis for a weke or thre  
For certeyn besys that I must be  
To stow with a place that is ours  
God helpe me so I wolde it were yours  
I shal not faile surely of my day  
Not for a thousand frankis o myle way  
But let this thyng be secret I pray  
For yet this nyght this besys must I be  
And fare nobel wel myn olde cosyn dere  
Gramercy of your cost and of your chere  
This nobyl marchaunt & that anon  
Answerde & sayde o cosyn myn dan John  
Nobel sikirly this is a smal request  
My gold is yours whan that ye list  
And not only my gold but my chaffare  
Take that ye list god shilde that ye spare  
But o thyng ye knowe wel y nough  
Of chapmen that for money is for plough  
We may craunce whyles we haue a name  
But goldes for to be it is a shame  
Paye it ayen whan it listh at your ese  
After my myght fayne wolde I you please  
These hundred frankis fere be forth anon  
And pryncely he took hem to dan John  
No wight of al this bond lyst of this bone  
Saying this marchaunt and dan John alone  
Deyn drynke & speke & come a while & pleye  
Til that dan John rydith to his abbey  
The morow cam & forth ridith this marchaunt  
To flaudris ward his prentis brought hym auant  
Til he cam to brigis wel and mery  
Nobel goth this marchaunt wel and besyly  
About his nedis & byeth & craunsith  
He neyther pl. yeth at the dys ne daunsith  
But as a marchaunt shortly to telle  
He ledde his lif & there I lette hym dwellle  
The Sunday next that this marchaunt was a gon  
To saynt denys is comyn dan John

## The tale of the Shypman

With crowne & herde al fresh & welbe shauē  
In al this hous ther nas so litil a knaue  
Ne no wyght ellis /but he was ful fayn  
That my lord dan john was comyn agayn  
And shortly to the poynt right for to goon  
This fayre wyf accordith with dan john  
That for his hundred frankis he shold al nyght  
Haue her in his armys bolt vp right  
And this accorde parfournyd is in dede  
In myrthe al nyght a lesy lif they lede  
Til it was day that dan john rede his way  
And lady the meyne farwel & haue goody day  
For non of hem ne no wyght in the town  
Hath of dan john ony suspencion  
And forth he ridith soom to his abbey  
Or wher hym list nomore of hym I seye  
This marchaunt whan that endyd was the feyre  
To seynt denys he gan agayn repaire  
And with his wyf he makith feste & chere  
And tellith her the chaffar is so dere  
That nedis must he make a cheurfaunce  
For he was bounden in a recognisaunce  
To paye xx thousand sheldis anon  
For which this marchaunt is to paris goon  
To borow of certeyn frendys that he hadde  
A certayn of frankis & some with hym he ladde  
And whan that he was come in to the town  
For chierce and grete affectioun  
Wnto dan john he goth first hym to pleye  
Not for to aye ne borowe of hym moneye  
But for to wyte & see his welfare  
And for to tellyn hym of his chaffare  
As frendis doon whan they mete in feire  
Dan john hym makith feste & mery chere  
And he hym tolde ful specially  
How he had wel sped & graciously  
Thankid by god al hool his marchaundyse  
Saue that he must in alle maner wyse

## The Tale of the Shypman

Makyn a chuefaunse as for the beste  
And than he shold; be in ioye and; reste  
Dan John answerd; certis I am faryn  
That ye in hile az compyn home agayn  
And yf that I were rich as I haue this  
Of xx thousand; sheldys shold; ye not mys  
For ye so kyndely this othyr day  
Lent me gold; and; as I can and; may  
I thanke you by god; & by saynt Jame  
But necheles I toke it vnto our dame  
Pour wyf at hoom the same gold; agen  
Wop on pour kench; she boot it wel certyn  
By certyn tokenys that I can you telle  
Now be pour leue I may no lenger dwelle  
Our abbot wol out of this toun anoon  
And in his company must I goon  
Grette wel our dame myn olben nete syster  
And farewell dere cosyn til we meete  
This marchaunt which þ; was ful waar & wyse  
Craunsid; hath and; payd; eke in payse  
To certyn lumburdis redy in her hend;  
The somme of gold; and; gatt of hem his bond;  
And; hoom he goth as mery as a popyngeay  
For wel he knelbe he stood; in such; aray  
That nedys muste he bynne in that byage  
A thousand; frankis about al his costage  
His wyf ful redy mette hym att; pate  
As she was wont of olde vsage algate  
And; al that nyght in myrthe they be set  
For he was rich and; cleerly out of dette  
When it was day the marchaunt gan embrace  
His wyf al nelbe and; kysse her in the face  
And; by he goth and; makith it ful tough  
Nemore quod; she by god ye shue ynough  
And; wantounly agayn with hym she playde  
Tyl att; laste the marchaunt thus sayde  
By god; ad; he I am a lital broth  
With you my wyf al though it be me both

## The Tale of the Shypman

And boot ye wif by god as I gesse  
That ye haue maad a maner seraunzenesse  
Betwix me and my cosyn dan John  
Ye shold haue warned me or I had goon  
That he had you an hundred frankys payde  
By redy token and helde hym euyl apayde  
For that I to hym spake of chuseaunce  
Me semp so as by his countenance  
But netheles by god our thynge kyng  
I thought to aye of hym no thyng  
I pray the wif doo no more so  
Tel me now or I fro the goo  
If ony dettour haue in myn absenche  
I payed the lest by thy negligence  
I myght hym aye a thyng that he hath payd  
And his wif was not aferd ne affrayd  
But boldly she sayd and that anon  
Mary I diffre that fals monk dan John  
I kepe not of his tokens neuer a deel  
He took me artyn gold that boot I wel  
What euyl thedom on his monkis shoulde  
For god it boot I wende wythouten doute  
That he had geue it me by cause of you  
To doo therewith myn honour and my proude  
For cosynage and eke for beleche  
That he hath had ful ofte tymes here  
But seith I see it stont in such dyspoynt  
I wol answere you shortly to the point  
I haue no slakker dettour than am I  
For I wol paye you redyly  
Ifro day to day yf so he I saye  
I am your wif skore it vpon my taye  
And eke I shal paye as sone as euer I may  
For by my trouthe I haue on myn away  
And not in waste bestoldyd it euerydel  
And for I haue bestoldyd it so wel  
For your honour for goddis sake I seye  
As he not wroth and let be laugh and pley

## The tale of the Shypman

Ye shal my ioly body haue to wedde  
By god? I wyl not paye you but a bedde  
Forgyue it me myn olben spouse dere  
Turnyth hithyr makith kithir chere  
This marchaunt salb ther was non other remedy  
And? for to chydre it were but a foly  
Syn that the thyng may not other be  
Nolb wyl he sayde & I forgyue it the  
And by thy lpf be no more so large  
Keepe better thy good? this gyue I in charge  
Thus endyth my tale and? god? be sende  
Talyng? ynough Vnto our lryps ende

Here endyth the Shypmannys tale

### Verba Hospitis

**W**El said by corpus dñs sayde our hoost  
Nolb longe moot thou sayle by the coost  
Thou gentil mayster gentil maryner  
God geue the monk a thousand? last quad yere  
A ha felowhe be waar of such a jape  
The monk put in the mannyes hood? an ape  
And in his wyrys eke by saynt austryne  
Drabwith no monkes no more to your inne  
But nolb pas ouer & lette be seke aboute  
Who shal telle a tale first of al this route  
A nother tale & With that word? he sayde  
As curteisly as it lnd? be a mayde  
My lady prioresse by your leue  
So that I wiste I shold? you not geue  
I wolde deme that ye tellyn sholde  
A tale next yf so were that ye wolde  
Nolb wol ye touchsauf my lady dere  
Gladly quod he & sayde as ye shul heere

Here endyth the wordes of the hoost

## The Prologue

Here beginneth the prioresses prologue

Domine dominus noster quam admirabile  
est nomen tuum in vn.versa terra /

**L**Ord our lord thy name euex merueilous  
Is in this large world y spread; qd; she  
For not al only thy laude precious  
parfourmed is by men of dignyte  
But by the mouth of chyldeyn thy counte  
parfourmyd is for on thy brest solushynge  
Somytyme shalben they thyng deryngge

Wherfore in laude as I can & may  
Of the & of the white alpy flour  
Whiche that the fair and; is mayde allway  
To telle a story I wol do my labour  
Not that I may encreas her honour  
For she her self is honour & the rote  
Of bounte next her sonne & soules boote

O moder mayde O mayde & moder free  
O luffsh vntrent brethynng in moyses sight  
That rauishedist down from the deyte  
Thowu thyn hūbles the ghoost that in þ a light  
Of whos vertue when he thyn herte lyght  
Conceyued; was the fadiris sapience  
Help me to telle it in thy reuerence

Lady thy bounte thy magnyficence  
Thy vertu and; thy grete humylyte  
Eter may no tunge expresse in no science  
For sumtyme lady or men praye the  
Thou goost befor of thy benygnte  
And getist vs the light of thy prayere  
To gyden vs vnto thy sone so dere

My konnyng is so weke o blissful quene

## The tale of the Prioressse

For to declare thy high worthynesse  
That I ne may the weyght sustene  
But as a chylde of twelfmonth olde of lesse  
That can vnnethe any worde expresse  
Right so fare I and; therefore I you praye  
Gidith my songe as I shal you saye

Here endeth the prioresses prologue



And; here begynneth her tale

**O**ther was in a grete toun  
Among cristen folke a iurge  
Susteyned by a lord of that contrie  
For foul vsure and; lucre of dishonre  
Hateful to crist & to his compaignie

## The Tale of the Prioressse

And thorow this strete men myghte ride & lide  
For it was fre and open at euery ende

A litil scole of cristen folke ther stood  
Doun atte fether ende in which ther were  
Children an hie comyn of cristen blood  
That lernyd in scole yere by yere  
Suche maner doctryne as men vsyn here  
This is to say to synge and to rede  
As smale chyldeyn doon in her chyldehed

Among thise chyldeyn was a bydolys sone  
A litil clergion seven yere of age  
That day by day to scole was his bone  
And eke also wher that he saw the ymage  
Of cristis moder had he in vsage  
As hym was taught to knele a doun & saye  
His Ave maria as he goth by the waye

Thus hath this bydole her litil sone taught  
Our blessed lady cristis moder were  
To worshipp ay & he forgat it nought  
For the sely chylde wolde alwey sone lere  
But ay when I remembre me on this matere  
Seynt nicholas stont euer in my presens  
For he so yong to crist dyd reuerens

This litil childe his litil booke lernynge  
As he sat in the scole at his primere  
He Alma redemptoris mater hardy synge  
As chyldeyn lernyd her antiphoner  
And as he durste he drewe ay nere & nere  
And herkenyd ay the wordes and the note  
Tyl he the first vers coude al by rote

Naught wiste he what this latyn was to say  
For he so yong & tender was of age  
But on a day his felow gan he pray

## The tale of the Prioressse

To expoune hym thys song in his langage  
Or telle hym why this song was in blage  
This prayde he hym to conſecell & declare  
Ful ofte tymes vpon his knees bare

His felow whiche that elder was than he  
Anſwerde hym thus this song I haue herd ſeyn  
Was made of our bleſſyd lady ſeyn  
Her to ſalwe & eke her for to preyne  
To be our helpe & ſocour whan we dey  
I can no more expoune in this matere  
I lerne ſonge I can but ſtil gramere

And is this ſong maad in reuerence  
Of criſtis moder ſayd this innocent  
Nolw ardeyn I wol doo my diligence  
To conne it al or criſtemas is al y went  
Though that I for my prymer be ſet  
And ſholde be bett thries in an houre  
I wol it conne our lady to honour

His felow taughte hym homlward pryncely  
Fro day to day tyl he coude it al by rote  
And than he ſong it wel & boldly  
Fro word to word accordyng to the note  
Ellys a day it paſſyd thorow his throte  
To ſchoolward and homlward whan he wente  
On criſtis moder ſet was al his entente

As I haue ſayde thorow out the jure  
This litil childe as he cam to and fro  
Ful merily wolde he ſynge and crye  
O alma redemptoris mater euer mo  
The ſweetneſſe his herte perfid ſoo  
Of criſtis moder that he to her preyne  
He can not ſeynte of ſynge by the weye

Our fiſt foo the ſerpent ſathanas

## The Tale of the Prioressse

That hath in Jues herte his waspis neste  
Opposid and sayde o churisch peple alas  
Is this a thyng that is to be honest  
That such a boy shal walkyn as hym lest  
In your despyte & synge of such sentence  
Which is ayenst our salvyng reuerence

For thens forth the Jewis haue conspired  
This innocent out of this worlde to chase  
An hompade thereto haue they hinde  
Right at an aley had a pryue place  
And as the chylde gan forth by to pace  
This cursid Jue hym hent and held faste  
And cutte his throte and in a pyt hym caste

I say that in a wardrope they hym threwe  
Where as the Jues purgen her entrayle  
O cursid folke of herodis al welbe  
What may your euyl entent you auayle  
Murder wol out certeyn it wol not fayle  
And namely ther the honour of god shal sprede  
The bloody out cryeth on your cursid dede

O matere solbodyng Vnto Virgynyte  
Now mayst thou synge folowynge euer in oon  
The whyte lambe celestyal quod he  
Of which the grete euangelist saynt John  
In pathmos broot which saith that they goon  
Beforen this lambe & synge a songe ay welbe  
That neuer flesshly woman they ne knewe

This poure widow alwaytith al that nyght  
After her lital chylde and he cam nought  
For which as sone as it was daye light  
With face pale of drede and fery thought  
She hath at scole and ells where hym sought  
Tyl fynally so fer she gan to espye  
That he last seyn was in the Jurye

## The tale of the Prioressse

With moders pyte in her brest enclosed  
She goth as she were half out of her mynde  
To euery place where she hath supposid  
By liklihood her litil childe for to fynde  
And euer on cristis moder meke and kynde  
She cryde & at the last thus she brought  
Among the cursid Jues she hym sought

She awith & she freyneth pitously  
Of euery Jue that duellid in that place  
To telle her yf her childe went aught forth by  
They sayd nay but Jesu of his grace  
Yaf in her thought withyn a litil space  
That in that place after her sone she cryde  
Where he was casten in a pyt besyde

O grete god that parfournyst thy laude  
By mouth of Innocentis so her thy myght  
This gemme of chastyte this emeraude  
And eke of martirdom the ruby bright  
There he with throte & coruyn lith vpright  
He Alma redemptoris gan to synge  
So soude that al the place gan for to rynge

The cristen folk that by the street went  
In cam for to wonder vpon this thyng  
And hastily they for the prouost sent  
Whiche fond the childe freshly yet bledynge  
And herieth crist that is of heuen kyng  
And eke his moder honour of mankynde  
And after that the Jues lette he bynde

This chylde with pytous lamentacioun  
Op takyn was syngeyng this song alwey  
And with honour & grete processoun  
They carie hym in to the nexte abbey  
His moder swounyng by his fere fere  
Whanethe myght the pepyl that was there

## The tale of the Pryoresse

This sorowful wchel bryngyn from the bere

With turment andz with shameful deth echoon  
This prouost doth thysse Iues for to sterue  
That of this murder wyse & that anoon  
He nolde no such cursidnes obserue  
Eupl shal he haue that eupl wol deserue  
Wherfore with wyldde hors he dyd hem dralbe  
Andz after he hangyd hem by the lalbe

Op on his bere ap lyeth this Innocent  
Before the hygh auter whyle the masse last  
And after that the abbot andz his couent  
Hem spedde for to bury hym ful fast  
And whan they holy water on hym cast  
Yet spak this childe whan sprent was holy water  
He sang o alma redemptoris mater

This abbot whiche that was an holy man  
As monkes been or this ought to be  
This ponge chylde to coniuere he began  
And sayde o dere chylde I coniuere the  
In the vertu of the holy trinite  
Tel me what is thy cause for to synge  
Syn that thy throte is cut to my sempnge

My throte is cut vnto myn necke soon  
Sayd this chylde & as by wey of kynde  
I shold a wyde & long tyme agoon  
But ihesu crist as ye in folkis fynde  
Wol that his glorie last andz be in mynde  
And for the worshyp of his moder dere  
Yet may I synge o alma loude andz clere

This welke of merey cristis moder swete  
I lound alwey as after my konnyng  
And whan that I my lyf shold forlete  
To me she cam & bad me for to synge

## The tale of the Prioressse

This anteme verp in my dypnge  
As ye haue herd & when that I herd songe  
Me thoughte she leyde a greyn on my tunge

Wherefore I spnge & spnge must certeyn  
In honour of that blessed mayde sue  
Tyl fro my tunge taken is the greyn  
And after that thus sayde she to me  
My litil chylde than wol I fetch the  
When that the greyn is fro thy tunge y take  
Be not agast I wol the not forsake

This holy monk this abbot hym mene I  
His tunge out caughte & toke alwey the greyn  
And he yaf vp the ghoost ful softly  
And when this abbot had this meruayl sayn  
His salt teiris tricked down as reyn  
And grouelung plat he fyl to the grounde  
And seple he lay as he had he y bounde

The couent eke lay vpon the pavement  
Weppng and herppng cristis moder dew  
And after that vp they wos & forth they went  
And toke alwey this martir fro his lew  
And in a tombe of marbyle stonys clew  
Enchosen they thys litil body swete  
There he is now godys lene be for to mete

O ponge helpe of lyncoln flayn also  
With cursid jues as it is notabyll  
For it is but a litil whyle a goo  
Prey eke for vs be synful folk vnstabyll  
That of his mercy /godys so mettable  
On vs his grete mercy multiplye  
For tuerence of his moder maye

Here endeth the prioresses tale

## The Prologue

Here foloweth the prologue of  
Chaucers Tale

**W**han sayd? Was this mynkil euery man  
As soþer Was that wonder Was to see  
Tyl that our hoost to iappyn began  
And than at erst he wold? Up on me  
And? sayd thus what man art thou qd? he  
Thou wold? as thou woldist fynde an hawt  
For euer Up on the ground? I see the state

Approche nere and? wold? Up meryly  
Nold? wate you first? & let? this man haue place  
He is shap? in the waste as wel as I  
This were a popet in an arme to embrace  
For ony idoman smal and? fayne of face  
He semyth elyssh by his countenaunce  
For vnto no wyght doth he dalaunce

Say nold? sumwhat syn other folk haue sayd?  
Tel vs a tale of myrthe & that anon  
Hoost quod? I ne ke not euyl apayd?  
For other tale certeyn can I noon  
But of a ryme y lernyd? longe a goon  
Ye qd? he that is good? y nold? let vs here  
Som depnte thyng? me thynglyth by thy chere

Here endeth the prologue

## Of Syr Topas



### Rhyme of Syr Topas

**L** Esen lordys in goodz entent  
And ȝ wol telle herment  
Of myrthe and of solace  
Al of a knyght faye and gent  
In batel and in turnament  
His name was sir Topas  
ȝorne he was in fer contrē  
In flaundris al be pondz the se  
At Doverynge in the place  
His fider was a man ful free  
A lord he was of that contrē  
As it was goddis grace  
Sir Topas was a doughty knyght  
Wher was his face as pynemeyn  
His hewis red as rose  
His rudder is lyke scarlet in greyn

## Of Syr Topas

As I telle you in good certeyn  
He had a semely nose  
His heer his herde was lyke saffron  
That to his girdle mought a doun  
His shoon of cordelbane  
Of bridgys were his hosen crown  
His robe was of felatoun  
That cost many a jane  
He coude hunt atte wyld deer  
And ryde an haukyng for reuer  
With grey goshauke on hond  
Therto he was agrette archer  
Of wastelyng was ther none his peer  
Ther ony ram shold stonde  
Ful many a mayde bright in flour  
They mornyd for hym paramour  
Whan hem were let to slepe  
But he was chaste and no lechour  
And swete as is the swambyl flour  
That berith the rede hipe  
And so it fyl vpon a day  
For sothe as I you telle may  
Sir Topas wolde out ryde  
He worde vpon his hors gray  
And in his hond a launcegay  
A long swerde by his syde  
He pricked thorow a fayr forest  
Therin is many a wyld best  
He bothe bulke and hare  
And as he pricked north & est  
I telle it you hym had almost  
Betwix a forp care  
Ther sprongen herbis grete and smale  
The licorice and the Cetuale  
And many a cloue gilofere  
And notemyng to put in ale  
Whether it be moyste or scale  
Or for to lay in collyre

## Of Syr Topas

The biddis synge it is no nap  
The sperhawk and the porpyngeap  
That joye lye3 to hew  
The throstel made eke his lay  
The wodde dollue vpon the strap  
He sang ful loude and cleere  
Sir Thopas' fil in loue longynge  
Al when he herde the thristel synge  
And prikid as he liere woodde  
His fayr stede in his prysynge  
So swete that men myght hym lerynge  
His sidre were al bloodde  
Syr Thopas eke so lery was  
For prichyng in the soft gras  
So fierse was his corage  
That down he leyde hym in the place  
To make his stede sum solace  
And gaf hym good forage  
A saynt marie benedict  
What aplith this loue at me  
To bynde me so sore  
Me drempde al this nyght parde  
An elfe quene sholde my lady be  
And slepe vnder my goote  
An elf quene wol I haue p this  
For in thys world no woman is  
Worthy to be my make in toun  
Al other women I forsake  
And to an elf quene I me take  
By dale and eke by doun  
In to his sadyl he clamb anon  
And prikid ouer seile & stoon  
An elf quene to aspre  
Til he so long hath riden and goon  
That he found a pryncy bone  
In the centre of fayr / So byple  
For in that contre was ther noon  
Nepther wyf ne chylde

## Of Syr Topas

Tyl that ther cam a grete geaunt  
His name was sir Oliphaunt  
A parous man of dede  
And sayd childy by termagaunt  
But yf thou pricke out of myn haunt  
None I sle thy stede / Wyth mace  
Here is this quene of fairye  
With harpe and vyge and symphonie  
Duellynge in this place  
The chylde sayde al so mot I the  
To morow wyll I mete wyth the  
When that I haue myn armour  
And yet I hope par ma fay  
That thou shalt wyth this launçgay  
A shew it ful sowe / Thy malis  
Shal I wete yf I may  
Or it be fully pyrme of the day  
For here shalt thou be slayne  
Sir Topas dwel a lile ful faste  
The geaunt at hym stonys caste  
Out of a fel staf slaynge  
But fayr ascapyd sir Topas  
And al was thynough goddes grace  
And thorough his fayr berynge  
Ye listenyth lordyngs to my tale  
Merier than the nyghtyngale  
I wyll wyth you rounne  
Holt sir Topas wyth sydes smale  
Puckynge ouer hylle and dale  
Is comyn agayn to toun  
His mery men commaundith he  
To maken hym bothe game and gle  
For nedis must hym fyghte  
Wyth a geaunt wyth feredys thre  
For paramour and Iolite  
Of one that shoon so bright  
Come do he sayde my mynstralis  
And gestours for to telle tales

## Of Syr Topas

Anone in myn aumpnye  
Of romaunys that been ryal  
Of popis and of cardynal  
And eke of loue longyng  
They set hym forth swete lypne  
And made in a masselpne  
And ryal spyckry  
Of gyngerbrede that was so fyn  
And licoria and eke comyn  
With sugir that is try  
He dyd next his lycht lew  
Of clothe a layke fyne and clew  
A brack and eke a sherte  
And next his sherte an hakew  
And ouer that an halergeon  
For persynge of his herte  
And ouer that a fyn hauberk  
Was al ȝ brought of iure lerbek  
Ful stronge it was of plate  
And ouer that his cote armure  
As lycht as is the silp flour  
In which he wol delure  
His sheld was al of gold so reed  
And therein was a lions heed  
A charbokyl by his syde  
And there he stode on ale and breed  
Holt that the geaunt shal be ded  
Wetyde what may kepde  
His jambouys were of queneholp  
His sherdie shethe of iourp  
His helme of latoun bright  
His sadil was of rebellone  
His bridyl as the sonne shoon  
Or as the mone light  
His spere was of fyn Epyresse  
That ledith bette & no thyng pces  
The heed ful sharpe y grounde  
His stede was al dappyl gray

## Of Syr Topas

It goth an ambyl in the way  
Ful softely and wunde / In bonde  
To lordys myn here is o fyt  
If ye wol ony more of it  
To telle yet wyl I fonde

**N**ow holde your mouth pour charite  
Bothe knyght and lady fre  
And herkenyth to my spele  
Of a batayle of chpualre  
And of ladies loue durye  
Anon I wyl you telle  
Men spekyng of romaunis of prynces  
Of hynchylor and of Ipotise  
Of leues and of sir Guy  
Of sir lileyn and of sir playndemour  
But sir Topas ferth the flour  
Of ryal chpualre  
His good steed al he bestrode  
And forth vpon his bey he rode  
As sparle out of sworde  
Vpon his crest he baar a tour  
And thern sekyrd a lily flour  
God shylde his body from shonde  
And for he was a knyght aunterous  
He nolde sleppyn in none hous  
But liggen in his hood  
His bright helm was his wonger  
And by hym layteth his destre  
On knyghts fyn and good  
Hym self drank water of the well  
As dyd the knyght sir percuell  
So worthily vnder wede

The host interrupteth his tale /

## The Wordes of the host

**N**O more of this for goddis dygnyte  
For thou qd<sup>r</sup> our host makist me  
So wery of thy very laboure  
That al so wys god<sup>r</sup> my soule bles  
Myn eris all yn of thy draffy speche  
Nold such a ryme the deupl I beche  
This may wel be a ryme dogetel qd<sup>r</sup> he  
Why so qd<sup>r</sup> I why wolt thou let me  
More of my tale than another man  
Syn it is the beste ryme that I can  
Oy god qd<sup>r</sup> he ful playnly at o word<sup>r</sup>  
Thy draffy rymynge is not worth a word<sup>r</sup>  
Thou dost nought ellis but spendyst tyme  
Syn at o word<sup>r</sup> thou shalt no lengyr ryme  
Let se where thou canst aught take in geste  
Or tellen in prose somwhat at the leste  
In which ther may be som myrthe or doctryne  
Gladly qd<sup>r</sup> he by goddis swete pyne  
I wol you telle a litil thyng in prose  
That oughte to lyke you as I suppose  
Or ellis certeyn ye be to daungerous  
It is a moral tale vertuous  
Al be it tolde somtyme in sondry wyse  
Of sondry folk as I shal you deuse  
And thus ye woot that euery euangelist  
That telle be the payne of Iesu crist  
He sayth not al thyng as his felow doth  
But netheles his sentence is al soth  
And al accordynge as in his sentence  
Al be ther in his tellyng difference  
For som of hem sayth more & som lesse  
When they his pyuous passyon expresse  
I mene of mark Mathew Luke and John  
But doubtles his sentence is al on  
Therefore lordynge I you beseeche  
If that ye thynke I tary in my speche  
As thus though that I telle somdel more  
Of proverbes than ye haue herd before

## The Wordes of the hoost

Comprehendyd in this litil tretys here  
To enforce wyth the effect of my matere  
And though I not the same wordes say  
As ye haue herde yet to you alle I pray  
Blameth me not for as in my sentence  
Shall ye nowhere fynde no difference  
For the sentence of this tretys lye  
After the whiche mery tale this I write  
And therefore harkenyth what I shal say  
And lette me telle my tale I you pray

Sequitur Chaubours tale



## The Tale of Chaucer



**A** Ponge man that called was mellekeus the whiche was myghty & ryche begat a doughter vpon his wyf that called was prudence whiche doughter called was Sophye / vpon a day kysse that he for his dysorte wente hym in to the feldeys for to playe / his wyf & his doughter hath he left wuthin his hous of whiche the dores were fast shytted / Thre of his olde foes hath hit aspyed & setten ladders vnto the wallis of his howse & by the wyndowes ben entred in / & lette his wyf / & wounde his doughter wuth fyue mortel woundes in v sondrye places / that is to say in hir feet / in hir hondes / in hir eeres / in hir nose / and in hir mouth / and lesten hir for dede and wenten hir way / whan mellekeus returned was in to hys howse and salve al thys myschep / he like a mad man rentynge his clothes began to wepe and crye

**P**rudence his wyf as farforth as she durst besoughte hym of his wepyng to stynte / But not forthy he began to wepe and crye euer longer the more / Thys noble wyf prudence remembryd her vpon the sentence of Ouyde in hys booke that cleped is the Remedye of loue / where

## The Tale of Chaucer

as he sayth / He is a fool that distrobleth the moder to wepe in  
the deth of her chylde / til she hath wepte her fylle as for a certayn  
terme / And than shal a man doo his dysgencz with ampayble  
wordes her to comforte / And praye her of her weppng to cese / For  
whych reson thys noble wyf prudenca suffred her husband to wepe  
and crye as for a certayn space / And whan she sawe her tyme /  
she sayd to hym in this wyse / Alas my lord sayd she why make  
ye your self for to be lyke a fool for soth it appertayneth not to a  
wise man to make such sorowde your daughter by the grace of god  
shal waisthe and escape / & al were hit so that he right now were  
dede / ye ne ought not for her deth your self to destoye / Seneca  
sayth / the wise man shal not take to greet dyscomforte for the  
deth of his chylde / But rather he shold suffre hit in pacience as  
wel as he abydeyth the deth of his owen propre persone /

**O** His mellecous answerd anon and sayde what man  
shold of hys weppng stynte that hath so greet cause to  
wepe / Ihesu cryst our lord hym self wepte for the deth  
of lazarus hys frende / Prudenca answerde Certes wel  
I wote a temperate weppng is nothyng defendyd to hym that is  
sorowful among folke in sorowde / But it is rather graunted  
hym to wepe / The apostle Paule Unto the Romanis wyrteth /  
Many shalle reioyse wyth hem that make ioye and wepe wyth  
suche folke as pyne / But a temperate weppng though it be grau-  
ted hym / Outrageous weppng rather is defendyd / Mesure of  
Weppng shold be consydred after the lore that Seneca tellyth  
us / Whan that thy frende is dede sayd he / Lette not thyng euen be  
to mope of teneis ne to mocke dre / Al though thy teneis come  
to thyng euen late hem not faile / & whan thou hast lost thy frende /  
do dysgently to gete the another frende / and thys is better than  
for to wepe for thy frende whiche thou hast lost / For therin is no  
bote / And therfor ys thou gouerne the by sappence put a waye  
sowde out of thy herte /

**R** Emembre the that Ihesus Sprak sayth / That a man  
that is ioyous and glad in herte / hit hym conserueth  
flourishyng in age / and sothly sorowful herte maketh  
his bones drye / He saith eke thus that sorowde in herte  
fleeth ful many a man / salamon saith that right as moththis in  
the sheep flees anoyeth the clothes / & the smale wormes the trees

## The Tale of Chaucer

Ryght so anoyeth sorowbe the herte of a man / Wherfor vs ought  
as wel in the dethe of our chyldeyn as in the losse of our goodes  
temporel haue patience / Rememkryng on the pacient Job / Whan  
he hadt lost his chyldeyn and his temporel goodes & had endured  
many a ful greuous temptaacion / yet sayd he thus / Our lord  
hath gyuen hit to me / Our lord hath kerafte it me / right so as  
our lord hath wolde right so hit is don / y blessyd be the name  
of our lord /

**O** thise forsayd thynges answerd Melibeus to hye  
wyf Prudence alle thy wordes ben sech sayd he and  
ther to proufftable / But truly myn hert is troubled  
with this sorowbe so greuously that I wote not what  
to doo / Eke al thy trewe frendes sayd prudent and alle thy sig  
nage whiche that ben wise come vnto the / and telle to them your  
caas and herken what they say in counceylling and gouern yow  
after her sentenx / Salamon sayth werke alle thy thynges by cou  
cyl and thou shalt neuer repente / Than by cause of the counceyl  
of his wyf Prudence / this Melibeus lete callen a grette congreg  
ation of folke as Cirurgens / Phisiciens / olde folke / & yonge  
and somme of his olde enenys reconciled as by there semblance  
to his soue and to his grace and there withal cam somme of hys  
nepghbours that dyd hym reuerence more for drede than for loue  
as hit happeth ofte / There comen also many subtil flaterers and  
wyse aduocates lerned in the lawe / And whan thise folke to  
gyder assembled were / This Melibeus shewed to hem in sorow  
ful wyse his caas / And by the maner of his speche hit semed  
that in his herte he hure a cruel yre redy to do vengeance vpon hys  
foos / and sodenly despyed that he shold begynne the batte / But  
neuertheles yet oved he there counceyl vpon this matre / A cyrur  
gen by licence and assente of such as were wyse wse vp / And  
to Melibeus sayd as ye may here /

**I**te sayd he as to vs Cirurgens / hit aperteyneth  
that we doo to every wyght the best that we can doo /  
where as we be wythholden and to our patiente that  
we doo no domynage / wherfor hit happeth many tyme  
and ofte / That whan two men haue the other wounded one  
Cirurgen sleeth hem both / wherfore vnto our arte hit is not

## The Tale of Chaucer

as he sayth / He is a fool that distorbeth the moder to wepe in  
the deth of her chyldre / til she hath wepte her fylle as for a certayn  
terme / And than shal a man doo his dysgencr with amiable  
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and crye as for a certayn space / And when she sawe her tyme /  
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shal warisshe and escape / & al were hit so that she right now were  
dede / ye ne ought not for her deth your self to destroye / Seneca  
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deth of his chyldren / But certis he shold suffre hit in pacience as  
wel as he abydeyth the deth of his owen propre persone /

**O** His melibeus answered anon and sayde what man  
shold of hys weppng stynde that hath so grete cause to  
wepe / Ihesu cryst our lord hym self wepte for the deth  
of lazarus hys frende / Prudence answered Certis wel  
I wrote a temperate weppng is nothyng defended to hym that is  
sorowful among folke in sorowde / But it is rather graunted  
hym to wepe / The apostle Paule vnto the Romayns wyrteth /  
Many shalle reioyse wyth hem that make ioye and wepe wyth  
such folke as pyne / But a temperate weppng though it be grau  
ted hym / Outrageous weppng certis is defended / Mesure of  
Weppng shold be considered after the lore that Seneca teacheth  
us / When that thy frende is dede sayd he / Lette not thyn eyen be  
to mooste of teiris ne to moche drye / Al though thy teiris come  
to thyn eyen late hem not falle / & when thou hast lost thy frende /  
do dysgently to gete the another frende / and thys is better than  
for to wepe for thy frende whiche thou hast lost / For therin is no  
bote / And therfor yf thou gouerne the by sappence put a wyse  
sorowde out of thy herte /

**R** Emembre the that Ihesus Sprak sayth / That a man  
that is ioyous and glad in herte / hit hym conserueth  
flourishyng in age / and sothly sorowful herte maketh  
his bones drye / He saith eke thus that sorowde in herte  
sleeth ful many a man / salamon saith that right as moththis in  
the sheep flees anopeth the clothes / & the smale wormes the trees

## The Tale of Chaucer

Ryght so anopeth sorolbe the herte of a man / wherfor he ought  
as wel in the dethe of our chylde as in the losse of our goodes  
temporel haue pacience / Rememkryng on the pacient Job / whan  
he had loste his chylde and his temporel goodes & had endured  
many a ful greuous temptacion / yet sayd he thus / Our lord  
hath gyuen hit to me / Our lord hath beraste it me / right so as  
our lord hath wold right so hit is don / y blessyd be the name  
of our lord /

**O** thise forsayd thynges answerd Melibeus to hys  
wyf Prudence alle thy wordes ben sech sayd he and  
ther to prouffitable / But truly myn hert is troubled  
with this sorolbe so greuously that I wote not what  
to doo / Eke al thy trewe frendes sayd prudent and alle thy sig  
nage which that ben wise come vnto the / and telle to them your  
caas and herken what they say in counceylling and gouern yow  
after her sentenx / Salamon sayth werke alle thy thynges by cou  
cyl and thou shalt neuer repente / Thin by cause of the counceyll  
of his wyf Prudence / this Melibeus lette callen a grette congre  
gation of folke as Cirurgens / Phisiciens / olde folke / & yonge  
and somme of his olde enemyes reconciled as by theyr semblance  
to his hous and to his grace and there withal cam somme of hys  
neighbouris that dyd hym reuerence more for drede than for loue  
as hit happeth ofte / There comen also many subtil flaterers and  
wyse aduocates lerned in the lawe / And whan thise folke to  
gyder assembled were / This Melibeus shelded to hem in sorow  
ful wyse his caas / And by the maner of his speche hit semed  
that in his herte he hure a cruel pre redy to do vengeance vpon hys  
foos / and sodenly despyed that he shold begynne the batte / But  
nevertheles yet oved he theyr counceyll vpon this matre / A cyrur  
gen by licence and assente of such as were wyse rose vp / And  
to Melibeus sayd as ye may here /

**I**re sayd he as to the Cirurgens / hit apperteyneth  
that we doo to every wyght the best that we can doo /  
where as we be wythholden and to our patiente that  
we doo no domage / wherfor hit happeth many tyme  
and ofte / That whan two men haue the other wounded one  
Cirurgen killeth hem both / wherfore vnto our arte hit is not

## The Tale of Chaucer

pertynent to norissh the better / ne parties to supporte / But certes  
as to the warysshynge and helpe of your daughter al be hit so  
that she be peribously hurt and wounded / we shal do ententif  
besynes fro day to day / that with the grace of god she shalle be  
hool and sound as sone as possyble is / Almost in the same wyse  
the phisiciens answered saue that they sayden a felbe wordes moo /  
That lyke as maladies ben cured by theyr contraries / right so  
shall men warissh the better by pees / His feryndes frendes that semed  
reconcyled and his flaterars made semblaunce of wepyng and  
empeyred and gruted moche in thys mater / Dreyfynge grette  
by Melleteus of myght / of polber of richesse & of frendes / dyspray  
fynge the polber of his aduersaries / & said biterly / that he anone  
shold breken hym on his aduersaries begynnynge warre / By wofe  
than an aduocate that was wyse / by keue and by counceyll of o  
ther that were wyse / And sayd lordynges for the neede whych we  
ben assembled in thys place ys ful heuy thyng and heuy mater  
by cause of the wronge and of the wyckednes that hath ben don  
and eke by reson of the grette dommages that in tyme comynge be  
possyble to falle for the same / And eke by reson of the grette Ri  
chesse and of the polber of the parties bothe / For the whiche  
hit were a ful grette peril to euen in this mater / wherfor mellete  
this is our entente / we coucil you / aboue al thyng that right and  
thou do diligence in keepynge of thy propre persone in such wyse  
that thou ne want none espyr ne watel / thy body for to saue / &  
after in thy hous we counceyll that thou sette sufficient garnyson  
so as they may as well thy body as thy holys defende / But  
certes for to meue warre ne sodenly for to doo vengeance / we  
may not deme in so lytyl tyme that hit shold be prouffyttable  
wherfor we aven leyser and space to haue deliberation in thys  
caas to deme / For the comyn prouerbe sayth thus / He that sone  
demeth / sone shalle repent / and eke men say that that Juge is  
wyse that sone vnderstandeth a mater and jugeth by leyser /  
For alle be hit soo that turnynge be noyful / Algate it is not  
to be reprovied in peyninge of judgement ne in vengeance takynge  
whan it is suffeyent and resonable / And that shalbed our  
Lord Jhu Cryste by ensample / For whan the woman that was  
taken in adoultry was brought in hys prece to knowe what  
shold be do of her persone / Al be hit that he wiste wel hym self

## The Tale of Chaucer

What he wolde do/ yet ne wolde he answere sodenly but he wolde  
 haue deliberation / and in the ground he wrote thynges / And by  
 this cause the age deliberation And he shal than by the grace of  
 god counceyllen you that thyng that is moste prouffitable / Up  
 starte than the yonge folke attones and the most parte of this  
 compaignie haue scorned this olde wyse man and begonne to ma-  
 ke noyse and sayden / Ryght so as while that yow is yote men  
 shold smyte Ryght so while that this thyng is fressh and newe  
 shold men breken her wronges / And wyth a loude voyce they  
 cryen Warre / Warre / Up rose then one of this olde wyse men / &  
 made countenaunce wyth his honde that men shold holde hem styll  
 and geue hym audyence / For dynges sayd he there is ful many a  
 man that cryeth warre warre that wote ful wel what warre a-  
 mounteth / Warre at his begynnyng hath so grette an entre & so  
 large that euery wyght may entre whan hym lyketh & lyghtly  
 fynde warre / but certis what ende that therof shal falle it is not  
 lyght to knowe / for sothly whan that warre is onces begon / there  
 is ful many a chylde borne of his moder that shal dye & sterue  
 yong by cause of that warre or ellis lyue in sorow or deye in  
 wretchednesse / And therefore or ony warre begyn men must haue  
 grette counceyl and grette deliberation / And whan this olde man  
 wende to haue enforced his tale by reasons / wel nyght attones be-  
 gan they al tarise for to breke his tale & had ful faste his wordes  
 tabredge / For sothly who so precheth to hem that haue no luste  
 to here his tale / his wordes or his sermon anoyeth hem / for Jhesus  
 saith that musike in wepyng is a noyous thyng / This is  
 as moche to say / as moche auayleth to speke before folke / to who  
 his speche anoyeth / As it doth to synge before hym that wepeth  
 And whan this olde man sawe that he wanted audyence / Alle  
 shamefast he sette hym down agayn / For salamon sayth / there as  
 thou mayst haue none audyence / enforce the not to speke / I see  
 wel sayd this wyse man that the comyn prouerbe is soth / That  
 good counceyl wanteth whan hit is moste nede /

**W** Et had this Melibeus in his counceyl many folke that  
 priuely in his ere counsilled hym certayn thynges and  
 counceyllen hym contrarie in general audyence / whan melibeus  
 sawe that the gretteste parte of his counceyl were accorded that he

A iii

## The Tale of Chaucer

shold make warre / anen he condescended to thei counceylling  
and fully affermed thei sentence /

**H** lord sayd Prudence I polb beset as hertely as I  
dar and can ne haste polb not to faste / And for alle  
guerdons as yeue me audyence / For piers alfons  
sayth / who so doth to the other good or harme haste the  
not to acquyte hit / for in this wise thy frende wyl abyde / & thy  
enemye shal the lenger lyue in drede / The proverbe sayth he has  
teth wel that can abyde hymself / & in wicked haste is no prouffyt /

**H**is Mellebeus answerd to his wyf Prudence / I  
purpose not sayd he to werke by thy counceyll for ma-  
ny causes and reasons / For certes euery wyght wold  
holde me than a fool / this is to say / yf I for thy counceyll  
lyng wold chaunge thynges that ben ordeyned & affermed by so  
many wyse peple / Secondly I say that alle women ben wicked  
& none good of hem alle / For of a thousand men sayth salamon  
I fond one good / But of al women / certes good woman fond  
I neuer noon / And also certes yf I gouerne me by thy counceyll  
hit shold seme that I had gyue to the ouer me the masterye / And  
god forbode that hit were so / for Ihesus sayth that yf thy  
wyf haue the masterye / She is contraryous to her husband / And  
salamon sayth to thy wyf ne to thy chylde ne to thy frende neuer  
in thy lyf ne yeue polver ouer thy self / For better it were  
that thy chyldeyn aye of the thynges that hem nedeth / than thou  
see thy self in the hondes of thy children & certes yf I shold werke  
by counceylling my counceyll must be somtyme secrete til hit were  
tyme that it must be knowe / And this may not be yf I shold be  
counceyllid by the / For women can kepe no counceyll /

**W**han dame prudence ful debonayrly & with grete pacy-  
ence had herd al that her husband liked for to say / than  
ayed she of hym licence for to speke & said in this wyse  
my lord said she as to your first reson it may lightly be  
answerd for I say that it is no folye to chaunge counceyll whan the  
thyng is chaunged or ellis whan the thyng semeth other wyse than  
it was before / & more ouer I say though that ye haue sworn & be  
hight to pforme your emprise / & by just cause ye do it not / me shol-  
de not say therfor that ye wer a lier ne forsworn / for þe book sayth  
þe þe wyse mā makith no lesyng whā he toorneth his corage to þe better

## The Tale of Chaucer

And al be it so that your emprise be establisshyd and ordeyned by grete multitude of peple / yet dar ye not accomplissh that same ordenaunce but you lyke / For the trowth of thynges & the prouf fit be rather found in felbe folke that ben wise & ful of reson than by grete multitude of peple where euery man claterith what that hym list / sothly suche multitude of peple is not honest / and to the second reson where as ye sayn that al women ben wycked / Saue your grace / certes ye despise al women in this wise / and be that al despiseth / al displeseth as saith the book / & seneke saith who so wol haue sapience shal noman despraise / but he shal gladly treke the science that he can wythout presumption / or pryde / and suche thynges as he can not / he shal not be ashamed for to lerne hem and enquire of lasse folke than hym self / And that there hath ben many a good woman / hit may be preuyd / For cryst wold neuer descende for to be borne of a woman / yf al women had be wycked / and after that for the grete konnte that is in our lord ihu cryste / whan he was risen from deth to lif / apperid rather to a woman than to his apostles / and though that salamon sayd he fond neuer woman good / yet forsooth not therfor that al women ben wycked / for though he fond no good woman certes many another man hath founden many a woman ful good / & ful trewe / or ellis pauenture thentent of salamon was this that in souerayn bounte he fond no woman / This is to say that there is no wyght so good that he ne wanteth som of the perfection of god that is his maker /

**U**nur thyrd reson is this / ye say that yf ye gouerne you be my counceyl hit shold seme that ye had yene me the maysterie and the lordship ouer your persone / Syr saue your grace / hit is not soo / yef hit so were that noman shold be counceylled but only of hem that had lordshipp and maisterie of his persone / Men wold not be counceylled so ofte as they ben / for sothly that man that aveth counceyl of a purpos yet hath he his fre choyse whether he wyl werke by that counceyl or not / And as to your fourth reson there that ye say that the janglerie of women can not hyde thynges that they knowe / as who saith a woman can not hyde that she woot / Syr thise wordes been to vnderstonde of women that ben janglerres & wycked of which women men say / that thre thynges dryuen a man sone out of his

A iii

## The Tale of Chabrier

spous / that is to saye / smoke / droppynge of rayn and wycked  
wyues / and of such women sayth salamon / that it were better to  
dwelven in deserte / than wyth a woman that is ryotous / and  
spr by your leue that am not I For ye haue ful ofte assayed my  
grette silence & my grette pacience And eke hold wel I can hyden  
and helle thynges that men ought secretly to hyde / And sothly  
as to your fyrthe reson where that ye say that in wicked counceyll  
women raynquyssh men / godd wyte that reson standeth here in no  
steede For vnderstonde now that ye are counceyll to do wyckednes  
And yf ye wol werke wickednes / And your wyf restrayne that  
wicked purpos and ouercome you by reson and by good coun  
ceyll / Eer is your wyf ought rather to be praysed than to be blas  
med / Thus shold ye vnderstonde the philosophye that wycked  
women raynquyssh her husboudes And there as ye blamen alle  
women and her resons / I shalke shewe by ensample that they be  
good and prouffitable / Eke somme men haue sayd that the  
counceyll of women is to dene / or elles to lytel of prynces / But al  
be hit so that many women be ludd / and her counceyll euyl and  
nothyng worth / yet haue men founde ful many a good woman  
and discrete and wyse in counceylling / So Jacob be the counceyll  
of his moder Rebecca than the blessing of ysaac his fader and  
the lordshipp ouer al his brethern / Judith by her good counceyll de  
liuered the cyte of beethule in whiche she dwellyd out of the han  
des of oliphernes that had besieged it and wold haue it destroyed  
Abigail deliuerd nabal her husbond fro dauid the kynge that  
wold haue slayn hym And presid the pryncesse of the kynge by her  
wytte and by her good counceyll / seker by her counceyll enhaunced  
gretly the peple of god in the Regne of assuerus the kynge / And  
the same counte in good counceylling of many a good woman  
men may telle / And eke more ouer when our lord godd had  
made adam our former fader / he sayd in this wyse / hit is not good  
man to be allone / make we to hym an helpe semblable to hym self  
so here may ye see that yf women were not good and her counceyll  
good and prouffitable / our lord godd of heuen wold neuer haue  
brought hem ne called hem helpe of man but rather confusion of  
man / And there sayd ones a clerke in tibo versis / what is better  
than jaspas / wyssedom / And what is better than wyssedom / woman  
and what is better than good woman / no thyng / And so spr

## The Tale of Chaucer

By many other reasons may ye see that many women can good & their counceyl good and prouffitable / And therfor yf ye wyl trust to my counceyllyng I shal restore you your daughter hool & sounde / And eke I wyl doo so moche that ye shalle haue honour in this case / Whan Melibee had herd the wordes of his wyf Prudence / he sayd thus / I see wel that the word of Salamon is soth / He sayth that wordes that ben spoken discretely by orde & naunce been honycombes for they geue swetenes to the soule and holsonnes to the body / By cause of thy swete wordes and eke for I haue assayed and preued thy grette sapience and thy grette trowth I wyl gouerne me by thy counceyl in alle maner thyng / Holb sir sayd dame Prudence / syn ye touchelauf to be gouerned by my counceyl I wyl enforme you how ye shal gouerne yow in charyng of your counseyl / First tofore all werkys ye shal beseeche the hyght god that he be your counceyl / And shap yow to such entente that he geue yow counceyl and comfort / As Iohys taught his sone / At alle tymes thou shal please and praye hym to dresse thy wares / And loke that al thy counceyl be in hym for euermore / Saynt Jame eke sayth / yf any of yow haue nede of sapience Aye it of god / And as for that than shal ye take couns in your self / And examyne well your thoughtes of such thynges as ye thynke that ben beste for your prouffyt / And than shal ye dryue alway from your hertes tho thynges that ben contraryous to good counceyl / this is to say / Ire / couetyse / and hastynesse / First he that aveth counceyl of hym self / Certes he must be with outen ire for many causes / The first is this that he that hath grette ire and wrath in hym self / he beneth alway to doo thyng that he may not doo / And secondly he that is irous and wrathfull may not deme wel / And he that may not deme wel may not wel counceyll / Another is this that he that is irous and wrathfull as sayth seneke may not speke but blameful thynges / And with his bypous wordes / he stereth other folke to angre and to ire And eke syr ye must dryue couetyse out of your herte / for thar possle sayth that couetyse is the rote of alle harmes / And truste wel that a couetous man can not deme wel ne thynke but only to fulfille the ende of his couetyse and certes that may neuer be accomplyssed / For euer more the more haboundaunt a man hath of Rycheffe / the more he desyreth / And ye muste also dryue out

## The Tale of Chaucer

of your herte hastynes / For certes ye may not deme for the beste  
hastely a soden thought that falleth in your herte / but ye muste  
aunse you on hit ful ofte / For as ye herde tofore the comyn pros-  
uerbe / which is this / he that sone demeth sone repenteth / Syr ye  
be not allway in like disposition / For certes somtyme suche thyngs  
as semeth that is good for to doo / Another tyme hit semeth to  
you the contrarye / And whan ye haue take counceyl in your self  
and haue demed by good consyleracion suche thyngs as semeth  
you beste / Than I counceyl you to kepe hit secrete / And beltraue  
not your counceyl to any persone but yf hit so be that ye bene  
sikerly that thurgh your beltrayng your condition shalle be to  
you the more proufftable / For Ihesus sirak sayth / neyther to  
thy frende / ne to thy foo discouer not thy secrete counceyl / ne thy  
folye / For they wyl geue the audyence / folowynge & supportynge  
in your presence / And scorne you in your absence / An other clerke  
sayth that scarsely shalt thou fynde any persone that may kepe  
counceyl secretly / The bokke sayth whyles that thou kepest thy  
counceyl in thy herte / thou kepest hit in thy pryson / And whan  
thou betrayest hit to any wyght he holdeth the in his snare / And  
therfor hit is better to hyde your counceyl in your herte / than pray  
hym to whom ye haue beltrayed your counceyl that he wol kepe  
it close and styll / For Seneca sayth / yf hit so be that thou ne  
may thy counceyl hyde / Hold darst thou pray any other wyght  
to hyde thy counceyl and kepe it secrete / But netheles yf thou  
bene sikerly that thy beltrayng of thy counceyl to a persone  
wyl make thy condycion stondyn in the better plyght / than shal  
thou telle hym thy counceyl as in this wyse / First thou shalt  
make no semblance whether the were leuer woe of werte / or  
this / or that / ne shewe hym not thy wyll / ne thy entente / For  
truste wel that comunly these counceyllours ben flaterers namely  
the counceyllours of grete lordes / For they enforce them allway  
rather to speke playsaunt wordes enclynyng to the lordes luste  
than wordes that ben trewe and proufftable / And therfor men  
sayn that the ryche man hath selde whan good counceyl but yf he  
haue it of hym self / And after that thou shalt consydere thy fren-  
des and thy enemyes / and as touchyng thy frendes thou shalt  
consydere which of hem ben moste trewe wyse / most faythful /  
oldest and most approued in counceyllynge / And of hem shalt

## The Tale of Chaucer

thou aye thy counceyl as the cas requyret / I say first that ye  
shal clepe to your counceyl your frendes that ben trewe / for Salamon  
sayth right as the herte of a man deliteth in sauour that is  
swete / Ryght so the counceyl of trewe frendes geueth swetnes to  
the soule / He sayth also there may no thyng be likened to a trewe  
frende / For certes gold ne syluer be not so moche worth as the  
good wyll of a trewe frende / and eke he sayth that a trewe frende  
is a grette defence / who that it fyndeth / certes he fyndeth a grette  
tresour than shal we eke vnderstonde yf that your trewe frendes  
ben dyscreet and wyse / for the book sayth / Aye allway thy coun  
ceyl of hem that ben wyse / & by this same reson shalle ye clepe to  
your counceyl of your frendes / that ben of age which that haue seyn  
many thynges / & ben expert in diuerse thynges / & be approued in  
counceylling for the book saith in olde men is the sapience & in long  
tyme is prudence & tullius saith / that grette thynges ben not accom  
plished by strengthe ne by deliuerance of body / but by coun  
ceyl and by auctorite of persones and by science / the wyseste  
thre thynges ne be not feble by age / but certes they enforce and  
encreas day by day / And than shal ye kepe this for a generall  
reule / First shal ye clepe to your counceyl a felwe of your fren  
des that ben special / For Salamon sayth / Many a frende haue  
thou / but among a thousand chese the one to be thy counceyllour  
For alle be hit so that thou first telle thy counceyl to felwe / Thou  
mayst after telle thy counceyl to moo folke yf hit be nede / But  
take allway that thy counceyllours haue tho thre condicions that  
I haue sayd before / that is to say that they be trewe / wyse / and  
of olde experyence / And werke not allway in euery nede by  
one counceyllour allone / For somtyme hit behoueth to be coun  
ceylled by many / For Salamon sayth / Saluation of thynges  
is there where be many counceyllours / Now sithe I haue tolde you  
of wyseste folke that ye shold be counceyllid / Now wyll I telle  
wyseste counceyl ye shalle eschewe / First ye shal eschewe the coun  
ceylling of folke / For salamon sayth take no counceyl of a fool  
For he ne can not counceyl but after his luste and his affection /  
The book sayth that the proprete of a fool is this / He troweth  
harne lightly of euery wyghte / And lightly troweth al bounde  
in hym self / ye shalle also eschewe the counceylling of flaterers  
such as enforce hem rather to prayse your persone by flattery / than

## The Tale of Chaucer

to telle you the sothfastnes of thynges / wherfor Tullyus sayth  
Amonge al the pestelencas that been in frendshyp / the greetest is  
flatterye / And therfor hit is more neede to eschelve and drede fla  
terers than any other peple / The booke sayth thou shalt rather fle  
and drede the swete wordes of flaterers / and prayfers / than the  
egre wordes of thy frende that sayth to the thy sothes / Salamon  
sayth that the wordes of a flatterer / is a snare to catche Innocentes  
he sayth also he that sayth to his frende wordes of swetnes and of  
playsaunce setteth a nette before his feet to catche hym / & therfor  
sayth Tullyus / Encline not thyne eeres to flaterers ne take no  
counceyll of wordes of flatterye / And Caton sayth Aupse the  
wel to eschelve wordes of flatterye / of swetnes and of pleyfance  
And eke thou shalt eschelve the counceyllinge of thyne olde ene  
myes that ben reconciled / The booke sayth What no wyght returneth  
in to the grace of his olde enemyes saufly / And ysaie sayth Ne  
trust not to hem wyth whom thou hast somtyme had bette or ene  
myte / ne telle not hem thy counceyll / And Senekke telleth the  
cause why it may not be and sayth wher as a greet fyre hath  
longe tyme endured / that there ne dwelleth somme vapour of  
warmnes / And therfor sayth salamon / In thyne olde foo trust  
thou never / For truly though thyne enemye be reconciled & maketh  
the chere of humylite & bouterh to the wyth his lode / ne trust hym  
never the more / For slyerly he maketh that feyned humylite more  
for his owne prouffyt than for the loue of thyne owne persone / by  
cause he demeth the to haue victorie ouer his persone by such fey  
ned countenaunce / The whyche victorie he myght not haue by  
stryf ne warre / Peter alfons sayth / Make no felawshyp wyth  
thyne olde enemyes / for yf thou doo / they wyll peruerce hit to  
wickednes / And eke thou must eschelve the counceyll of such  
that ben thy seruantes and ben the greet reuerence / For peras  
uenture they say more for drede than for loue / And therfore sayth  
a philosophre in this wyse / There is no wyght partyghtly true  
to hym that he sore dredeth / And Tullyus sayth / there is no wyght  
so greet as an emperour that longe may endure but yf he haue  
more loue of his peple than drede / Thou shalt eschelve the coucil  
of folke that ben dronkelele / For they can no counceyll hyde /  
For Salamon sayth there is no pryncer wher as regneth dron  
kennes / He shal allway haue in suspecte such folke as counceyll

## The Tale of Chaucer

you one thyng pryncely and counceyller you the contrarie openly/  
Cassiodore sayth that it is a maner sleight to hynde/ whan a man  
shelbeth to doo one thyng openly and wycketh the contrarie pryncely/  
Thou shalt also haue in suspect the counceylling of wycked  
folke / For the book sayth That the counceyll of wycked folke is  
alwey ful of fraude / And dauid sayth / That blyssful is that  
man that hath not folowed the counceyll of wycked folke / Thou  
shalt also eschewe the counceylling of yonge folke for her coun-  
cyll ys not ryght /

**A**ld first syth I haue shewedy you alle thys of wycked  
folke ye shal take your counceyll and of wycked folke  
ye shal eschewe theiur counceyll / Now wol I telle you  
how ye shal examyne your counceyll / After the doctry-  
ne of Tullyus in examynynge than of your counceyllours ye  
shal considere many thynges / Alderfirst thou shalt considere / that  
in that thyng that thou art purposed and vpon what thyng thou  
shalt haue counceyll that veray trouthe be sayd and consuetud  
This is to say / telle al truly thy tale / For he that sayth fals /  
may not wel be councelled in that cas of the wycked he lyeth /  
And after thys consydere thre thynges that accorde to that thou  
purposyst the first for to doo by thy counceyllours yf reson accorde  
ther to / And eke yf thy myght may attayne ther to / And yf the  
more parte and the better parte of thy counceyllours accorde ther to  
or noo / Than shalt thou consydere what thyng shalbe folowed of  
that counceylling as hate / wrothe / grace / prouffyt / or domage  
and many other thynges / And of al those thynges thou shalt  
considere of what wote is engendryd the mater of thy counceyll /  
What feynt it may contene and engendryn / Thou shalt consy-  
dere eke alle the causes from whens they be sprongen / And whan  
ye haue examynedy your counceyll as I haue sayd and wycked  
parte is the better and more prouffitable and haue approuedy by  
many wyse folke and olde / Than shalt thou consydere yf thou  
may perfourme hit and make of hit a good ende / For reson  
woldy not that ony man sholdy begynne a thyng but yf he myght  
perfourme hit as hym oughte / ne no man sholdy take on hym so  
heuy a charge that he myght not bere hit / For the prouerbe sayth  
he that to moche embraceth discrepnech lyth / And caton sayth also

## The Tale of Chaucer

Assaye to doo such thynges as thou hast polver to doo / on lesse  
that the charge oppresse the to sore / And that the behoueth to  
weyue that thyng that thou hast begonne / and yf that thou be  
in doubt whether thou may performe hit or not / Else rather to  
suffre than to begynne / And Peter alfons sayth / yf thou haste  
myght to doo a thyng which thou must repente / hit is better nay  
than ye / this is to say that hit is better to holde thy tongue seple  
than for to speken / I han mayst thou vnderstonde by stronger re-  
sons / That yf thou hast polver to performe a werke / the whiche  
thou shalt repente / than it is better that thou suffre than begynne  
Syn they that defenden euery wyght to assaye a thyng of the  
whiche he is in doubt / whether he may performe it or noo / And  
after whan ye haue examyned your counceyl as I haue sayd be-  
fore and knowe wel that ye may performe your emprise / con-  
ferme hit than sadly til it be at an ende /

**N**ow it is reson sayd the and tyme that I shalbe told  
whan and wherfore that ye may chaunge your coun-  
cylours withouten repress / Sothly a man may chaun-  
ge his counceyl or his purpos yf the cause casseth or  
whan an other cause begynneth / For the salbe vpon thynges that  
nelybetyden behoueth nelybe counceyl / And Seneca sayth yf  
that thy counceyl come to the eeres of wicked men thy enemies  
chaunge thy coucil / thou maist also chaunge thy coucyl yf so be that  
ther be errour or thou fynd ony other cause harme or domage may  
fetyde / Also yf thy counceyll be dyshoneste or ellys cometh of dys-  
honest cause chaunge thy counceyl / For the salbe sayth that al fals-  
tes that ben dyshoneste ben of no valur / And eke yf so be that it  
be impossyble or may not goodly be performed or kept / take this  
for a general rebble that euery coucyl that is affermed so streng-  
ly that it may not be chaunged for no condycion that may fetyde  
I say that yllke counceyl is wycked /

**T**his Melibeus whan he herd the doctryne of his wyf  
Dame prudence he answered in this wyse / Dame sayd he  
as yet in to this tyme ye haue couenably taught me as  
in general holb I shal gouerne me in charyng and wythholdyng  
of my counceyllours / But now wolde I sayn that ye wolde

## The Tale of Chaucer

condescende especial andy telle me howe lyketh or what semeth yow  
be your counsellours that we haue chosen in our present nedes /

**O** lord sayd she I beseeche you in alle humbleste that ye  
wyl not wilfully repley agens my reason / ne distempre  
your herte though I speke thyng that you displese for  
godys wote that is not myn entente / I speke hit for  
your beste / for your honour andy prouffyt eke Andy sothly I hope  
that your kengyshe wyl take hit in pacyence / that your counsyl  
as in thys case ne sholdy not as to speke properly be callyd a  
counsellynge but a monypon or a meynynge folke / in which  
counsyl ye haue choyd in thassemblynge of your counsellours  
for ye sholdy first haue choyd a felde folke to your counsyl / &  
after that ye myght haue shewyd it to moo folke yf it hady be  
nede / But certes ye haue sodenly choyd to your counsyl a grette  
multitude of peple ful chargeaunt andy ful anoyous for to lye  
Also ye haue choyd for there as ye sholdy haue choyd to your cou  
nsyl your trewe frendes olde andy wyse / ye haue choyd straunge  
folke / false andy flatterars andy enemyes reconsyled & folk / that  
don yow reuerence wythout lye / Andy also ye haue choyd for ye  
haue brought wyth you gre / couetyse andy hastynes / the wyse  
thre thynges ben contraryous to euery honest counsyl andy prouf  
fyttable / andy wyse thre thynges ye haue not amenyed ne des  
troyed neyther in your self ne in your counsellours as ye ought  
ye haue choyd also for ye haue shewyd to your counsellours  
your talent andy your affection to make warre anon andy for to  
doe vengeance / They haue aspyed by your meynynge to what  
thyng ye be enclyned / andy therfor haue they counsyled yow  
rather to your talent than to your prouffyt / ye haue choyd also  
for yow semeth that it suffyseth yow to haue be counsyled by  
thys counsellours only andy wyth lye a wyse / where as in so  
grette nede andy so hye / hit hady be necessarye moo counsellours /  
Andy more deliberation to performe your emprise / ye haue choyd  
also for ye haue not examyned your counsyl in the forsayd ma  
ter ne in welbe manere as the case requyeth / ye haue choyd for  
ye haue made no dyspyson byt wyse your counsellours / Thys  
is to say Wythout your frendes andy your feyned counsellours

## The Tale of Chaucer

ne ye haue not knowe the wyse of your frendes olde and wyse /  
 But ye haue cast alle her wordes in an hutchepot / and enclyned  
 your herte to the more parte and to the gretter nombre and by  
 polb condempned / And also ye wote wel that men shul alway  
 fynde a gretter parte of nombre of foolles than of wyse men / And  
 therfore the auntyles that been at congregacions and multitu  
 de of folke there as men taken more reborde to the nombre than  
 to the sappyence of persones / Ye see wel that in such councylls  
 ges folke haue the masterye /

**D** Eleus answered agayn I graunte wel I haue erred  
 But there as thou hast tolde me her before that he is  
 not to blame that chaungeth his counceyl in certayn  
 cases and for certayn Just causes / I am alle redy to  
 chaunge my counceyllours right as thou lyst and as thou wyllt  
 deuyse / the prouerbe sayth that for to doo synne is mannyssh / but  
 certis for to perseure long in synne it is a werke of the dyable /

**O** this sentence answered dame prudence and sayd  
 Exampne your counceyl and let vs see which of hem  
 haue spoken most resonable and taught polb best counceyl  
 And for as moche as the exampnacion is necessarye  
 late vs begyn at surgens and at physiciens that first spoken in  
 this matre / I say polb that the surgens & the physiciens haue  
 sayd polb dyscretly as them ought / For they sayd ful wysely  
 that to the offyce of hem hit appertayneth to doo to euery wyght  
 honour & prouffyt / and no wyght to ennoye / And after they  
 craft doo grette dyspygence vnto the cure of hem the whiche they  
 haue in gouernaunce / And syr right as they haue answered wy  
 sely and dyscretly / right so I rede polb that they be hyghly and  
 soueraynly gylverdonned for her noble speche / and eke for they  
 shold do the more ententif besynes in the curacion of your doughter  
 For alle be hit so that they be your frendes therfor shal ye not  
 suffre that they shal serue you for nought / But ye ought to  
 guerdon hem and shewe hem largesse / And as touchyng that  
 the physiciens encresped in this case that is to say that in mala  
 dyes one contrarye is waristhed by a nother contrarye I wold

## The Tale of Chaucer

sayn knolwe hold ye vnderstonde that tyste and what is your  
sentenx / Certes sayd mellekeus I vnderstonde that in thys wyse  
That right as they haue doon me a contrarpous right / right so  
shold I doo hem an oher / For right as they haue venged hem  
on me and doon me wronge / right so shold I venge me on hem &  
do hem wronge and than haue I cured one contrarie by an other  
contrarye / So said dame prudence hold lightly is euery man enclp  
ned to doo his owen desire & his owen playfance / Certes sayd she  
the wordes of the phisiens shold not be vnderstonde in this wyse  
for Certes wyckednes is not contrarious to wyckednes / ne venge  
ance to vengeaunce no wrong to wrong but eueryche of hem encre  
sith and aggredegyth other / But Certes the wordes of the physy  
ciens shold be vnderstande in this wyse / For good & wyckednes  
be twe contrarpous / and ptes and warre / vengeaunce & suffraunce  
and discord and accorde / and many other thynges / But Certes  
wyckednesse shalle be varyffied by goodnes / And dyscorde by  
accorde / and warre by ptes / and so forth by other thynges / and  
her to accordeth seynt Poule thapostle in many places / He sayth  
yelde not harme to harme ne wycked speche to wycked speche but  
do wel to hym that doth the harme and blisse hym that sayth the  
harme / And in many other places he sayth and amonesteth ptes  
and accorde / But now wol I speke to you of the counaill which  
that was yue to you by the men of lawe and wyse folke that  
sayden alle by one accorde as ye haue herde / that ouer al thynges  
ye shold doo dyspynce to kepe your persone and to warnstore  
your holde / And sayden also that in thys case ye ought for to  
werken ful aduysedly and wyth grete dyscrecion and delibera  
on / And sye as to the fyrst poynte that toucheth the keepynge  
of your persone ye shalle vnderstonde that he that hath warre  
shalle euermore deuoutly and mekely beseken and prayen before  
alle thynges Ihesu Cryste of hys mercy that he wol haue hym in  
his protection and be his souerayn helper at his nede / For Certes  
in thys werke there is no wyght that may be couerped ne kept  
suffiaently wythout the keepynge of our lord Ihesu Cryste / To  
thys entente accordeth the prophete dauid that sayth yf god ne  
kepe the Cpte / in ydel waketh he that kepeth hit / Now sye than  
shul ye commyte the keepynge of your persone to your twelue  
frendes that ben y prouyd and knolben / And of them shalle

## The Tale of Chaucer

ye age helpe your persone to kepe / For Catthon sayth yf thow  
haue nee of helpe age hit of thy frende / And after thys than  
shalle ye kepe you from al straunge folkes and fro lyers and  
haue alleway in suspect her companye / For Peter alfons sayth  
ne take no companye by the waye of straunge men / But yf hit so  
be that thou haue knowen hem before tyme / And yf so be that ye  
haue not knowen hem / And wyl nedes ful in thy companye  
peraventure wythout thy assente / enquire then as subtylly as  
thou canst or mayst of his conuersacion and of hys lyf before  
And sayne thy waye and say that thou wylt goo thyder as thou  
wolt not goo / And yf he be a spere holde the on the ryght syde  
And yf he be a syluerde holde the lyft syde / And after thus  
than shalle ye kepe yowr wyfely from alle such maner peple as  
I haue sayd before and hem and her counceyl eschelde / And  
after thys than shal ye kepe yowr in such maner that for ony  
presumpcion of your strengthe / that ye ne despyse ne attempte  
not the myght of your aduersaie / And thus belate that ye  
lette not the keepynge of your persone for ony presumption / For  
euery wyse man dredeth hys enemye / And Salamon sayth  
wyfely is he that of no thyng hath drede / For artes he that  
thorough the hardynes of his herte or of hym self hath to grete pre  
sumpcion / hym shal euyl betyde / than shal yowr euermore countra  
waye enbusshmentis in speciall / For senekke sayth the wyse man  
that dredeth harmes / eschelyeth harmes / ne he falleth in no payll  
that peryll eschelyeth / And al be hit so that thou seme that thou  
be in siker place / yet shalt thou doo alleway diligence in keepynge  
of thy persone not only from thy gretest enemyes but from the  
lesse enemye / Ouyde seyth / That the lypyll wesyl wol fle a  
grete hole and the grete herte / And the book sayth / That a hitil  
thorne may prycke the kyng ful sore / And an hounde wil flee  
the wilde fore but netheles I say not that thou shalt be so colbarde  
that thou doubt / where as is no drede / the book saith that som fol  
ke haue grete lust to despyue / but yet they dreden hem to be despy  
ued / thou shalt dred to be enuoysoned / & kepe the from the compa  
ny of sworners / For the book sayth with sworners make no com  
panye / But fle her wordes as Benym / Nolle as to the ij poynt  
where as your wyse counceyllours counceylled yowr to warnstere  
your hous with grete dyligence I wold fayn knowe how that

## The Tale of Chaucer

ye vnderstonde the wordes and? what ys the sentence / Melebeus  
 answered? and? sayd? / Certes I vnderstonde hit in this wyse that  
 I shalke barnstowe my hous wyth toures such as be castelles  
 and? other maner edyfices wyth armure and? other maner artyls  
 serpe by such thynges whiche I may my persone and? my holdes  
 so defenden that myn enemyes shal be in drede my hous for to  
 approche /

**O** this sentence answered anon prudence / barnstowynge  
 sayth she of grete towres and edyfices wyth grete costes  
 ages and? grete trauayll / And? whan that they be ac-  
 complished? yet be they not worth a stralbe / But yf  
 they ben defended? by twelue frendes that ben olde and? wyse / And?  
 vnderstonde wel that the greetest & strongest garyson that a rich  
 man may haue as well to kepe his persone as his good? is that  
 he be belouyd? wyth his subgettis and? wyth his neyghbours / For  
 thus sayth Tullyus that there is a maner garyson that no man  
 may raynquyshe ne dyscomfite / & that is a lord? to be belouyd?  
 of his cytyzens and? of his peple / Now syr as to your thyrde  
 point / wher as your wyse and? olde counceyllours sayd? that ye  
 ne ought not sodenly ne hastely to proceden in this neede / but that  
 ye oughten to purueye and? apparaylen in this caas wyth grete  
 dyslygence and? grete deliberacion truly I trowe they sayden right  
 wysely and? ryght soth / For Tullyus sayth in euery neede er thou  
 begynne / yet apparayl the wyth grete dyslygence / Than sithe tha  
 in vengeance takynge in warre in batayle and? in barnstowynge  
 er thou begynne I rede that thou appareyle the thereto and? doo hit  
 wyth grete celyberation / For Tullyus sayth that longe apparay-  
 lynge before the batayl maketh short victorie / And casspode saith  
 that the garyson ys the stronger whan hit is longe tyme aduysed?  
 But now late vs speke of the counceyl that was accorded?  
 by your neyghbours such as don yow reuerence wythouten  
 loue / your olde enemyes reconsiled / your flaterers that counceyll  
 yow certayn thynges openly / And? pryncely counceyll yow  
 the contrarye / The yonge folke that counceyle you to aken-  
 ge yow and? make warre anon / Certes syr as I haue sayde  
 before / ye haue greteuly erred? to haue cleped? such maner of folke  
 to your counceyll / whiche counceyllours ben ynough repleued?

## The Tale of Chaucer.

asowysyd by reson / But neuertheles late he nolde descende to  
the special / ye shal first procede after the doctryne of Tullius /  
Certes the trowth of thys matere or of thys counceyl nedeth not  
dplygently enquire / For it is wyse well wyse they be that  
haue don to yow thys trespass and bylonye and hold many tres-  
passours / and in what maner that they haue doo to yow alle  
thys wronge and alle thys bylonye / And after thys shal ye exa-  
myne the second condycion / Wyse that the same Tullius addeth  
in thys same matre / For Tullius putteth a thyng / Wyse  
that he calleth consentynge / This is to say who ben they and which  
ben they and hold many consentyn to thys counceyl in thys wyseful-  
nes to doo hastye vengeance / And lette consydere also who be they  
and hold many be they that consenten to your aduersaries / and  
certes as to the fyrst poynt it is wel knowen which folke they  
be that consenten to your hastye wysefulnes / For certes alle tho  
that counceyled yow to make soden barre be not your frendes  
Lette he nolde consydere wyse be they that ye holden so greatly  
your frendes as to your personne / For alle be hit so that ye be  
so myghty and ryche / Certes ye be but allone / For ye haue no  
chylde but a daughter / Ne ye haue no brethern ne cosyns / Ger-  
mans ne none other nygh kynrede / wherfor that your enemyes  
for drede sholden seynt to plete wyth yow or destroyen your persone  
Ye knowe also that your ryche must be despyded in dyuerse  
partyes / and whan that euery wyght hath his part they ne  
wyll take but hityl ward to kengen your deth / But your  
enemyes ben thre and they haue many children / Brethern  
Cosyns / And other nygh kynrede / And though so were that  
thou haddest slayn twe or thre of hem / yet dwellen there ynough  
to wreken her deth and to flee thy persone / And though so be that  
your kynrede be more spker and stedfast than the kynrede of your  
aduersaries / yet neuertheles your kynrede nys but after kynrede  
they be but lytyl subget to yow / And the kynrede of your ene-  
myes ben nygh sibbe to hem / And certes as in that her condition  
is better than yours / than lette he consydere also if that the coucil of  
hem that counceyl yow to take soden vengeance whether hit acor-  
de to reson or noo / And certes ye knowe wel nay / For as by  
right or reson there may no man take vengeance on no wyght but  
the iuge that hath the jurisdiction of hit / whan hit is graunted

## The Tale of Chaucer

hym to take that vengeance hastily or attemperately as the lalbe  
 requyret / And yet more ouer of that word that Tullus sayth  
 and clepeth concentynge / thou shalt considere of thy myght and  
 thy power may consente and suffyse to thy wyllfulnes and to thy  
 counsayllours / And certes thou mayst wel say nay / For spkerly  
 as for to speke properly he may doo no thyng but only such  
 thynges as he may doo rightfully / And certes thou mayst right  
 fully take no vengeance / as of your proper auctoryte / Than  
 may ye see that your power ne consenteth ne accordeth your wyll  
 fulnes / Lete vs examyne the thyrd point that Tullus clepeth  
 consequent / Thou shalt vnderstonde that the vengeance that thou  
 purposest to take is consequent / And therof foloweth a nother  
 vengeance wyl and warre and other dommages wythout nom  
 bre of wyche he be not ware as at this tyme / and as touchyng  
 the fourthe parte that / Tullus clepeth engendryng / Thou  
 shalt concyde that this wrong which is don to the / is engen  
 dred of the hate of thy enemies and of vengeance takyng vpon  
 hem that wol engendre a nother vengeance and moche sorowe &  
 wastynge of ryches as I sayd before / Now sye as to the fyfthe  
 point / which that Tullus clepeth / causes which is the last  
 point thou shalt vnderstonde that like wrong that thou hast re  
 ceved hath certayn causes whyche that clerkes clepen / occyngs  
 and effyngs and causa longynqua and causa proppynqua / this  
 is to saye the fer cause and the nygh cause / The fer cause is alle  
 myghty god that is cause of alle thynges / The neer cause is  
 thy trewe enemyes / The cause accidental was hate / The cause ma  
 teriall is the true woundes of thy doughter / The cause formal  
 is the cause of her worthynge that broughten ladders and clom  
 ben in at the wyndowes / The cause fynall was to see thy dought  
 er hit letted not in as moche as in hem was / But for to  
 speke of this fynal cause as to what ende they shalle come / or  
 what shalle fynally betyde of hem in this cas / He can I not deme  
 But by coniectyng and supposyng / For he shal suppose that  
 they shalle come to a wycked ende / by cause that the book of the  
 decres sayth / Selde or wyth grete payne he causes brought to  
 a good ende / whan they be badely begonne / Now sye of men  
 wold ye me why that god suffreth men to do this vylonye certes  
 I can not wel answer as for no sothfastnes / For thapostle sayth

## The Tale of Chaucer

That the Ipenace and the Jugementis of our lord god almyghty  
 ben ful depe / There may no man comprehende ne sette hem suffy-  
 ciently / Netheles by certayn presumptions and coniectynges I holde  
 and byleue that byghyt that is ful of justyce and rightfulnessse  
 hath suffryd the to betyde by just cause and resonable / Thy nas  
 me is Mellete / This is to say a man that drynketh hony / thou  
 hast drunken so myche hony of swete temporel ryches and delices  
 of honour of this world that thou art dronke and hast forgotten  
 Ihesu cryste thy creatour / Thow hast don to hym such honour  
 and reuerence as thow oughtest / Ne thou hast wel taken heed  
 of the wordes of Ouyde that sayth / Under the hony of the goodes  
 of the body is hydden venym that sleeth the soule / And Salamon  
 sayth yf thou hast founde hony etc of hit that suffyleth / For yf  
 thou etc of hit out of mesure / thou shalt spelbe / and be ne dy-  
 vout / and paraventure Cryste hath the in despyte / and hath tor-  
 ned a way fro the his face and his mysericorde / And also he  
 hath suffryd that thow hast be punysshed in the maner that thow  
 hast trespassed / Thow hast don synne agayn our lord Ihesu cryste  
 For wrecche the thre enemyes of mankynde that is to say the flessh  
 the fende and the world thou hast suffryd hem for to entre in to  
 thy herte bylfully by the byndolles of thy body / And hast not  
 defended thy self suffycently agaynste her assaulce and her tempta-  
 tions / so that they haue wounded thy soule in fyue places that  
 is to say / the dedely synnes that ben entred in to thy herte be thy  
 fyue byttres / And in this maner our lord Ihesu cryste hath suf-  
 fered that thy thre enemyes ben entred in to thy herte by the  
 byndolles / And haue wounded thy daughter in the maner  
 aforesayd /

**O**ertes sayd Mellete I see well that ye enforce yow  
 myght by wordes to overcome me in such maner as  
 I shalle not venge me of myn enemyes Shewyng me  
 the peryll and the euyl that myght befall of this  
 vengeaunce / But who so wold consydere in alle vengeances the  
 peryll and the euyl that myght selve of vengeaunce takyng / a man  
 wold neuer take vengeaunce / and that were harme / for by venge-  
 aunce takyng ten wicked men desseuerd from the good men / And  
 they that haue byll to do wickednes restreyned her wicked purpos

## The Tale of Chaucer

Whan they se the punysshing and the chastising of the trespassours  
 And yet say I more / that right as by synfuler presumption he  
 synneth in takynge vengeance of a nother man Ryght so synneth  
 the Juge yf he take not and doo vengeance on hem that hit haue  
 deservyd / Senek sayth thus / That mayster is good he sayth that  
 reppreuth shrelves / And casspode sayth a man dredeth to doo  
 outragpously whan he boot and knolbeth that it dyspleseth the  
 Juges and souveraynes / and another sayth The Juge that dredeth  
 to do ryght maketh shrelves / And saynt poule thapostle saith hold  
 he lryteth to the romayns that the Juges were not the spere wyth  
 out cause / But they were hit to punysshen the shrelves and mysdo  
 ers / And for to defenden the good men / yf ye wyl take venge  
 ance on your enemyes ye shalle retorne and haue your cours to  
 the Juge that hath the Jurysdiction vpon hem and ye shal punys  
 shen hem as the lawe ayeth and requyret /

**A** Sayde Melke this vengeance liketh me nothyng I  
 lenthynke me now and take heed hold that fortune hath  
 norissid me fro my chylthode and holpe me to passe  
 many a straunge pias / Now wol I assaye in her trolu  
 yng with goddes helpe that shal me saue for to venge / arres sayd  
 prudence yf ye wyl lverke by my counceyl ye shal not assaye for  
 tune by no waye / ne ye shalle not lene ne holbe vnto her after the  
 word of senek / For thynges that ben folply doon and that be  
 doon in hope of fortune shal neuer come to good ende / And as  
 to the same senek sayth the more cleve and the more thynnyng  
 that fortune is / the more brotil / and the sonner broken she is /  
 Truste ye not in her / For there nys no stedfastnes ne stableness  
 in her / For whan thou trolvest to be moste sure and sykier  
 of her / She wyl faylle and decaye the / And where as ye sayn  
 that fortune hath norissid you in your chylthode / I say that there  
 is so mykil the lasse truste in your witte / for senek sayth what  
 man that is norissid by fortune she maketh hym a fool / Now  
 sithe ye desyre and ave vengeance / And the vengeance that is  
 doon after the lawe and before the Juge lyketh not you / And  
 the vengeance that is doon in hope of fortune is perpyous and vn  
 certayn / than haue ye no remedye but for to haue your recours  
 vnto the souverayn Juge that vengeth al vilonyes and wronges /  
 and he shal venge you after that hym self wytnesseth where as he

## The Tale of Chaucer

sayth / leue ye the vengeance vnto me and I shalle do hit /

**W**ellke answerde yf I venge me not of the bylonnye that men haue don vnto me I somnone and warne hem that haue don to me thys bylonnye and alle other to doo me bylonnye / For it is wryton yf thou takest no vengeance of an olde bylonnye / thou somonest thy aduersarye to doo the a newe bylonnye / Also for my suffraunce men wold doo me so grete dishonre that I myght not bere hit ne susteyne hit / and than shold I be put and holde ouer blbe / For men sayn in mykyl suffryng that many thynges falle vnto the which thou ne shal noli suffre /

**W**ellke sayd dame prudence I graunte yow wel that ouer moche suffraunce is not good / But yet hit foloweth not therof that euery person to whom men do bylonnye to take of hit vengeance / For that appertyneth and longeth al only to the iuges / For they shalle venge the bylonnies and the iniuries / and therfor the elbo auctorites that yow haue sayd tofore be abosely vnderstonde in the iuges / for whan ye suffre ouer many wronges and bylannes to be don withouten paynsshyng they seme not a man to do only newe wronges but they commaunden hym and bydden hym to doo synne / And the souerayns and the iuges in theyr contrayre so mykyl suffre of the shrewdes and mysdoers / that they shold by such suffraunce and by proces of tyme wagen of such power and myght that they shold put out the iuges and the souerayns from theyr places / and at the laste to make hem to lese theyr lordshippes / but lette be noli put that / that ye haue leue to venge / I say ye be not of myght ne power as noli to venge yow / For yf ye wyl make comparyson vnto the myght of yowr aduersaries / ye shal fynde in many thynges that I haue shewyd yow or thys / that her condycion is better than yowre / And therfor say I that it is good as noli that ye suffre and be payent / Furthermore ye knowe well that after the comen salbe / hit is a woxenes to a man to stryue wyth a more myghty man than he is hym self / and for to stryue wyth a man of euen strengthe / that is to say wyth a man that is as stronge as hym self / hit is grete peryl / And for to stryue

## The Tale of Chaucer

With a wayker than hym / hit is folwe / And therfor shold a  
man flee scrupynge as myght as he myght / For Salamon saith  
Hit is a greet worshyp to a man to kepe hym fro noyse and scrif  
And yf so happe that a man of greet myght and strengthe than  
thou arte doo the greuaunce / Studie and besye the rather to stynte  
the same greuaunce / than for to venge / For sencke sayth That he  
putteth hym in greet peryl that scrueeth with a greet man than  
he is hym self / And caton sayth that yf a man of hyer estate or  
degre or of more myght than thou art doo the anoyr or greuaunce  
suffre hym / For he that ones hath greued the may another tyme  
releue the and helpe the / yet set I caas that ye haue a lience for  
to venge yow / yet ought yow to take hede to al thysse thynges  
aforesayd er that ye take vengeaunce / For I say that there be full  
many thynges that shalke restayne yow of vengeaunce takynge &  
make yow for to enclpne to suffre and to haue pacyence in the  
wrongees that haue be don / First and for ward and yf ye wyll  
considere the defaultes that be in your owen persone / For whiche  
defaultes godd ha h suffred yow to haue al thys tribulacion as I  
haue sayd before to yow / For he Poete sayth / That we ough  
ten paciently to taken the tribulacions that comen to vs whan  
we thynke and considere that we haue deserued to haue them / &  
Saynt Gregore saith / that whan a man considereth wel the nom  
bre of his defaultes and synnes / the paynes and tribulacions  
that he suffreth seemen the lasse to hym / And in as moche as hym  
thynke h his synnes more heuy and greuous in so moche seemeth  
his payne more lychter and esier to hym / Also ye oughten to  
enclpne and folwe your lorde to take the pacyence of our lord  
Jesu cryste as sayth saynt Peter in his epystles Jesu Cryste he  
sayth that suffred for us and gaf ensample to euery man to folow  
we and suwe hym / for he dyd neuer synne He neuer cam ther out  
of his mouth vyleynous worde / whan men cursid hym / he cursid  
hem not / And whan men beten hym / he manasced hem not / also  
the greet pacient that sayntes whiche that ben in paradysse haue  
had in tribulacions that they haue suffred withouten her deserte  
or gylte ought moche stynte your payne / For ye shold enforce  
yow to haue pacyence / Considerynge the tribulacions of thys  
worlde that lital whyle enduren and sone passyn and goon / and  
the joye that a man seketh by pacience in tribulacions is pducible

## The Tale of Chaucer

After that the Apocalyps sayth in his epistle / The joye of god  
 he sayth is perdurable that is to say everlastynge / also tolde he  
 wel and eke beleue stedfastly. that he is not wel nor shyd ne  
 well taught that wyll not have pacience / ne wyll not receyve pacy-  
 ence / For Salamon sayth That the doctrine of a man and the  
 wytt is knowen by pacience / And in an other place he sayth  
 that he that is pacient governeth hym by grete prudence / and the  
 same Salamon sayth / The angry and the wrathful man maketh  
 noyses / And the pacient man attempteth hym and styllyth hym /  
 he saith also / he is more worth to be pacient thene for to be right  
 stronge / And he that may have the lordshipp of his owen herte is  
 more to prayse than by his force or strengthe taketh grete pryce  
 And therfor sayth Seynt Jame in his epistle That pacience is a  
 grete vertue of perfection / Certes sayd Melchir I graunte dame  
 Prudence that pacience is a grete vertu of pfection but every man  
 may not have the perfection that ye seke / ne I am none of that  
 nombre of right perfight men / For my herte may never be in pces  
 unto the tyme that hit be vengyd / And al be hit so that hit was  
 grete peril to myn enemyes to doo me a bysonnyr in takynge ven-  
 geance vpon me / yet wolke they no feere of the payrl but fulfilled  
 theyr wycked wyll and courage / And therfor me thynketh men  
 ought not to reprove me / though I put me in a litel payrl for to  
 venge me / And though I do a grete excusse / That is to say that  
 I a venge one outrage by a nother /

**H**ayde dame prudence ye say your wyll as you liketh  
 But in no case of the worlde a man shold not doo  
 outrage ne excusse for to venge hym / For cassiodore saith  
 that as euyl doth he that a vengeth hym by outrage as  
 he that doth the outrage / And therfor ye shal venge yow after  
 the ordre of ryght / that is to say by the lawe / and not by excusse  
 ne by outrage / And also yf ye wyll venge yow of the outrage  
 of your aduersaryes in other maner / ye synne / And therfor saith  
 Senek that a man shal never venge shrewdnes by shrewdnes /  
 and yf that ye say that right aveth a man to defende byolence by  
 byolence / and fyghtynge by fyghtynge / Certes ye say soth / when  
 the defence is don anon wythouten interval or wythouten taryeng

## The Tale of Chaucer

or delay for to defende hym and; not for to venge hym / And; yet  
behoüeth that a man put such temperaunce in his defence that men  
haue no cause ne mater to reuolke hym that defendeth hym of oul  
traze or of exesse / For ellys were hit agayn reson / Forde ye  
knowe wel that ye make no defence as noll for to defende yow /  
but for to venge yow / And; so sueth it that ye haue no wyll to do  
your wyll attemperatly / And; therfor me thynketh that pacience  
is good; / For Salamon sayth / that he that is not pacient shal  
haue grete harme /

**C**ertes sayd; meketh I graunte yow that whan a man  
is impacient and wroth of that which tolleth hym  
not & that aperteyneth not to hym / though hit harme  
hym it is no wonder / For the salbe sayth that he is  
culpable that entermeteth or medleth of thyng that aperteyneth  
not to hym / And; Salamon sayth / That he that entermeteth hym  
of the noyse of scryp of a nother man / is like to hym that taketh  
a strange hound; by the eeres / For right as he that taketh a  
strange hound; by the eerys / he is otherwysse byten wyth the  
hound; / Ryght in the same wyse / it is reson that he haue harme  
that by his impacience medlyth hym of the noyse of a nother man  
where as hit aperteyneth not to hym / But ye knowe well that  
thys dede that is to say my grief and; my desire toucheth me right  
nygh / and; therfore though I be wrothe and; impacient it is no  
meruayll / And; sauyng; your grace I can not see that I shold;  
grete harme me though I take vengeance / For I am ryghter and  
more myghty than myn enemyes ten and; it is wel knowen that  
by money and; hauyng; grete possyons ten al thynges of thys  
world; gouerned; / And; also Salamon sayth that alle thys  
thynges obeyen to money / whan Prudence had; herd; her husbond;  
a vaunte hym of his rychesse and; of his moneye dyspraysyng;  
the polver of his enemyes she spak; & sayd; in thys wyse / certes  
dere syr I graunte yow that ye be ryght and; myghty / And; that  
richesses ten good; to hem that haue gotten hem well & that well  
can vse them / For right as the body of a man may not lyue  
wythout the soule / nomore may the lyf wythout temporel goodes  
And; by rychesse may a man gete hym grete frendes / & therfore

## The Tale of Chaucer

sayth pamphyles of an erles daughter be ryche he sayth she may  
chese of a thousand men whom she wyl take to her husband / For  
of a thousand men one wyl not forsake her / And this pamphy-  
les sayth also of that thou be right happy that is to say of thou be  
ryche thou shalt fynde a grete nombre of felawes and frendes / &  
of thy fortune chaunge farewell frendshyp and felawshyp for  
thou shalt be alone wythout ony compagne / But of hit be the com-  
paigne of poure folke / And yet sayth thys pamphyles more ouer  
that they that ben bonde and thral of bygnage shal be made wor-  
thy and noble by rycheesse / and right so as by richesse there comen  
many goodes / right so by pouerte there comen many harmes and  
euylles / And therfor clepeth cassiodore pouerte the moder of ruyne  
that is to say the moder of ouerthrowynge or of fallynge down / &  
therfor sayth Peter alfons / one of the greetest aduersiteys of  
thys world is whan a freman of kynde or of byrthe is constray-  
ned by pouerte to ete the almesse of his enemye / And the same  
sayth Innocence in one of his bookes that sorowful & myshappy  
is the condycion of a poure beggar / For of he aye not his mete /  
he dyeth for hungrye and of he aye he dyeth for shame / and algate  
necessyte constrayneth hym to aye / And therfor sayth Salamon  
That better it is to dye than to haue such pouerte / And as the  
same Salomon sayth better it is to dye a bytter deeth than to lyue  
such a lyf / By thys resons that I haue sayd vnto you and by  
many other that I coude say I graunte that rycheesse ben good to  
hem that gete hem wel and to tho that vse wel thys rycheesse /  
And therfor wyl I shewe you / how ye shal behaue you in ga-  
drynge of your rycheesse / and in what maner ye shal vse them /  
First ye shal gete hem wythouten grete desyre / by good kynde  
sokynge and not ouer hastily / For a man that is to desyre  
in getynge riches haboundeth hym first to thefte and to alle other  
mysfelles / And therfor sayth Salamon he that hasteth hym to  
lesly to haue ryche he shal be none innocent / he sayth also that  
the ryches that hastily cometh to a man / soon and hastily goth  
and passeth from a man / But that ryches that cometh lital and  
lital weyeth ellibay and multiplyeth / And therfor ye shalle  
gete ryches by your witte and by your traueyll vnto your prou-  
fyt / And that wythouten ony wrong or harme doyng to ony  
other persone / For the salwe sayth there maketh no man hym self

## The Tale of Chaucer

ryche yf he do harme to another wyght / this is to say that nature  
 defendeth and forbedeth by ryght that no man make hym ryche  
 vnto the harme of a nother persone / And Tullyus sayth that no  
 sorow ne drede of dethe ne of thyng that may befall vnto man  
 is so moche agayn nature as a man to encreasen his olben prouffit  
 to the harme of a nother man / And though that grete & myghty  
 men gete ryches more lightly than thou / yet shalt thou not be y  
 dle / But shelve to doo thy prouffyt / For thou shalt in alle wyse  
 flee ydlenes / For Salamon sayth That he that traueyleth in y  
 dlenes techeyth a man to doo many euyles And the same Salas  
 mon sayth / He that traueyleth and lesyeth hym to tulle his  
 bonde shalle ete brede / And he that is ydle and casteth hym to no  
 lesynes ne occupation shalle falle in to pouerte and dye for hun  
 gre / And he that is ydle and sloke can neuer fynde couenable  
 tyme for to doo his prouffyt / For there is a bersepar sayth / that  
 the ydle man excuseth hym in wynter by cause of the grete colde &  
 in sommer by excusen of hete / For thys cause sayth Caton wa  
 keth and enclyneth you not ouer mykel to slepe / For ouermuche  
 reeste norysshyth and causeth many vyces / And therfor sayth  
 Seynt Jerome doth somme good deces that the deuyll whiche that  
 is your enemye fyndy yow not vncoupyed / For the deuyll taketh  
 not lightly to his worchyng suke as he fyndeth oupyed in good  
 werke / Than thus in getyng of ryche ye must flee ydlenes / &  
 afterwarde ye shal vsee the ryches whiche ye haue gotten by your  
 wytt and by your traueyl in suke maner that men holde yow  
 not to scarce ne to sparyng ne to fool large that is to say ouer  
 large a spender / For right as men blame an auaricious man  
 by cause of his scarsenes and chynckerpe / in the same wyse is he  
 to blame that spendeth ouer largely / And therfor caton sayth  
 Use thy ryches that thow hast gotten in suke maner as men haue  
 no matre ne cause to say ne calle the neyther wretched ne chynche  
 For it is a grete shame to a man to haue a poure herte & a ryche  
 purs / He sayth also the goodes that thou hast gotten Use hem by  
 mesure that is to say spende them mesurably / For they that fo  
 lyly spende and wastyen the goodes that they haue / whan they  
 haue nomore propre of theyre olben / they shapen hem to take the  
 goodes of other men / I say than that ye shal flee auarice vsping  
 your ryche in suke maner that men say not that your ryches

## The Tale of Chaucer

is deuoured / But that ye haue hem in your myght and in your  
weldyng For the wyse man reproveth the auaricious man and  
sayth thus in two versys / Wher to and why burgeth a man his  
olben goodes by his grete auarice and knoweth wel that nedes  
must he dye / For deth is the ende of euery man as in this pre-  
sent lyf / And for what cause and encheyson joyneyth or knytteyth  
he hym so fast to his goodes / that al his wytt is molye not dys-  
seuer ne departe hym from his goodes / And knoweth well or  
owght to knowe that whan he is dede he shal nothyng bere wyth  
hym out of this world / And therfor sayth Saynt Augustyn /  
That the auaricious man is lykened vnto selle / that the more  
hit seloweth the more hit despyeth to selowen and to deuoure /  
And as wel as ye wolde eschewe to be called an auaricious  
man or a chynche / as wel shold ye kepe polb and gouerne polb  
in such wyse that men clepe polb not fool large / therfore sayth  
Tullius the goodes of thyn hous ne shold not be hyde ne kept  
so close but that they myght be opened by pyte and by donayte  
that is to say to geue hem parte that haue grete neede / Ne thy goo-  
des shold not be so open to be euery mannes goodes / Afterward  
in getyng of your ryche and bypyng hem ye shal alleway haue  
thre thynges in your herte / That is to say our lord god / good  
conscience / and good name / First ye shal haue god in your  
herte / And for no ryche ye shal doo no thyng which may in  
any maner wyse dysplese god that is our creatour and maker  
After the word of Salamon / hit is better to haue a lytel good  
wyth the loue of god than for to haue moche golde and tresour  
and to lese the loue of his lord god / And the prophete sayth  
that better it is to be a good man and haue litil good & tresour  
than to be holden a shreibe and haue grete ryche / And yet say  
I furthermore that ye shal alleway do youre besynes to gete you  
riches so that ye gete hem wyth good conscience / And the apostle  
sayth that there nys no thyng in this world of which we shall  
haue so grete ioye as whan our conscience berith vs good wytnes  
And the wyse man sayth that the substaunce of a man is full  
good whan synne is not in mannes conscience / Afterward in  
getyng of your ryche and in bypyng of them ye muste haue  
grete besynes and dyspaynce that your good name be alleway  
kept and conserued / For Salomon sayth That better is and

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more it auayleth a man for to haue a good name than for to haue many ryches / And therfor he sayth in an other place / doo grete dyligence in keepyng of thy frende and in keepyng of thy good name / For hit shal lenger abyde wyth the than ony other tresour be hit neuer so precyous and certes he shold not be called a gentyl man that after god and good consaience alle thynges leste he doth to kepe his good name / And cassiodore sayth that it is sygne of a gentil herte whan a man loueth and despyeth to haue a good name / And therfor sayth saynt Augustyn / that there be two thynges that be necessarye and needful / that is good consaience and good loos / And he that trusteth hym so mykyl in his good consaience that he despyeth and setteth at nought his good name or loos he doth not luel / For he that rekkech not to kepe his good name nys but a cruel chere / Wyte noli haue I shalbedy yowb holi ye shold doo in getyng of ryche / and holi ye shold vse hem / And I see wel that for the trust that ye haue in your ryches ye wole meue warre and bataylle / I counceyll yowb that ye begyn no warre in trust of your ryches / For they suffyse not warres to mayntene / And therfor sayth a phylosophre / that man that despyeth algate and wyl haue warre shal neuer haue suffisaunce / For the ryche that he is the gretter dyspense must he make yf he wyl haue worship and victorie / and Salamon saith That the gretter ryches that a man hath the more dyspense he hath And therfor al be hit so that by fortune and ryches ye may haue many folke / yet kepeth it not ne it is not good to begyn warre / where that ye may haue in other maner pees vnto your worship and prouffyt / For the victories that ben of bataylle in this world / ben not in grete nombre and multitude of peple ne in vertu of man / but hit lyeth in the wylle and in the hond of our lord Ihesu god almyghty / And therfor Judas machabeus whiche that was goddes knyght / whan he shold fyght agaynst his aduersaries that had a gretter nombre and gretter multitude of peple and strengar than was the peple of Machabee / yet he recomforted his lytyl peple and sayd ryght in this wyse / Also lightly sayd he may our lord god geue victorie to a fewe folke as to many folke / For the victorie of a batayl cometh not by a grete nombre of peple but hit cometh from our lord god of heuen And dew spt for as moche as there is no man certayn that he be

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Worthy that godd lyf yeue hym bytornge or not / Salamon sayth  
Therfor eury man shold grete drede warre to begynne and  
by cause that in batayll falle many parlyse / And happeth other  
whyte that also sone is a grete man slayn as a litel man / And  
as is wryton in the second book of kynges / the dedes of batayll  
ben a venturous and nothyng certeyn / For as lyghtly is one  
hurte wyth a spere as a nother / And for there is grete parly in  
warre therfor shold a man eschewe and fle warre in as myghtly  
as a man may goodly / For Salamon sayth He that buyth pa  
ryl shal falle in parly / After that dame Prudence had spoken in  
thys mater Melibeus answered and sayd I see wel dame Pru  
dence that by fayr wordes and by your reasons that ye haue she  
wed me / that warre lyketh yow nothyng / But I haue not herde  
yet in thys counceyl / whil I shal doo in thys nede / Certes sayde  
she I counceyl yow that ye accorde wyth your aduersaries that ye  
haue peas wyth hem / For Saynt Jame sayth in his eppistles /  
That by accorde and peas the smale ryche wyse grete / And by  
debate and dyscorde the grete ryche fallen down and faylen /  
ye knowe wel that one of the greetest and most souerayn thyng  
that is in thys worlde is byte and peas / And therfore sayth  
our lord Ihesu cryst to his apostles in thys wyse wel happy and  
blessyd be tho that louen and purchaen peas / For they be called  
chyldeyn of god / A sayde melibeus now see I wel that ye shue  
not myn honour ne my worschyp / Ye knowen that myn aduersa  
ries haue begonne thys debate / And ye see wel that they ne re  
quyre ne praye me of peas ne they are not to be reconcyled wold  
ye than that I goo and meke me and othe me vnto hem and aske  
hem mercy / Forsothe that were not my worschyp / For right as  
men sayn ouergrete humblenes engendryth grete dyspryncyng so  
shold it fare by me in doyng thys grete humylyte or mekenes /  
Than began prudence to make semblaunce of idrath and sayd sit  
saue your grace / I shue your honour and your prouffyght as I  
doo myn olben and euer haue doo / neyther ye ne none other  
shalbe neuer the contrarye / And yet yf I had sayd that ye shold  
haue purchasid your peas and the reconciliation I ne had myght  
myscaied ne sayd amys / For the wyse man sayth the dissention  
begynneth by another man / And the reconcyllyng by hym self  
begynneth / And the prophete sayth / Ifle shrewdnes and doe

## The Tale of Chaucer

goodnes seke pes & folow hit in as myghyl as in the is/ yet say  
I not that ye shal rather purselue to your aduersaries for pes /  
than they shal to you / For I knowe wel ynough that ye be so  
harde of herte that ye wyl doo no thyng for me / And Salamon  
saith that he that hath ouer harde an herte he at leste shal myschaunce  
and mysfayre / Whan melbecke had herd dame prudence make sem-  
blaunce of wrath he sayd in thys wyse / Dame I praye you that  
ye be not dyspleyd of thynges that I saye / For ye knowe well  
that I am angry and wroth and that is no wonder / And they  
that been wroth wote not wel what they doon ne what they sayn /  
Wherefore the prophete sayth that troubled eyes haue no clere sight  
But saye ye and counayle me as you goodly lyketh / For I  
am redy to doo ryght as ye wyl desyre / And yf ye wyl reprove  
me of my folye I am the more holden to loue you and to prayse  
you / For Salamon sayth / He that reproveth hym that doth  
folye he shal fynde gretter grace than he that dysseueth hym  
wyth swete wordes / Than sayde dame prudence I make no  
semblaunce of wrath ne of angre but for your prouffyt / For Sa-  
lomon sayth / He is more wroth that reproveth or chydeth a fool  
for his folye shewyng hym semblaunce of wrath than he that  
supporteth hym and prayseth hym in his mysdoynge and calyeth  
at his folye / And thys same Salamon sayth afterward that  
by the sorowful bysage of a man that is to saye by the sorow and  
the heuy countenaunce of a man the fool correcteth hym self and  
amendeth / Than sayde Melbecke I shal not conanswere you vnto  
so many fayr resons as ye haue put to me and shewed / Saye  
ye shortly your wyl and your counayle and I am redy to per-  
forme and fulfyll it / Than dame prudence dyscoueryd al her  
wyl vnto hym & sayd / I counayle you aboue alle thynges that ye  
make pes betwene god & you / and be ye reconciled vnto hym &  
to his grace / For as I haue sayd before / God haue suffrid you  
to haue alle thys trybulacion and disce for your synnes / And  
yf ye doo as I saye you / God wyl sende your aduersaries  
vnto you and make hem falle at your feet / redy to doo your  
wyl and your commaundementes / For Salamon sayth  
Whan the condycion of a man is plesaunt and likyng to god /  
he chaungeth the hertes of the mannys aduersaries & conserueth  
hem to beseeke hym of pes and of grace / And I praye you lette

## The Tale of Chaucer

me speke wyth your aduersaryes pryuely / For they shalle not  
knowe that it be your wyll or your assente / and than whan I  
knowe her wyll and her entente I may counceyl you the more  
selvrlly / Dame sayd Melleke doo your wyll and your lpyng  
for I put me only in your disposition and ordernaunce /

**T**han whan dame prudence salve the good wyll of her  
husbond delyteryd and toke aduys in her self / thyn-  
kyng how she myght bryng thys ned to a good con-  
clusion and to a good ende / And whan she salve her  
tyme she sent for thys aduersaryes to come to her in to a pray-  
place / And shewyd wysely vnto hem the grette goodnes that  
come of pees / and the grette harmes and paysses that ben in  
warre and sayd to hem in a goodly maner / how that they ough-  
ten to haue grette repentaunce of the iniurye and wrong that they  
had doon vnto melleke her lord vnto her and her doughter /

**A**nd whan they herd the wordes of dame prudence they  
were so enspurred & rayssed and had so grette joye of  
her that wonder was to telle / A lady sayd they ye haue  
shewyd vnto vs the blessing of swetnes after the sa-  
we of dauid the prophete for the reconcylng / whiche that we be  
not worthy to haue in no manere / but we oughen to requyre it  
with grette contricion and humylyte / that ye of your grette good-  
nes haue presented vnto vs / Now see we wel that the sayng  
and the conyng of Salamon is ful trewe he sayth that swete  
wordes multiplye and encreasen frendes and make shrewdes to be  
debonayr and meke / Certes sayd they we put alle our dede and  
al our mater and cause / hooly in your good wyll / And be redy  
to obeye to the commaundement of my lord Melleke / And de-  
re and freygne lady we praye you and beseeche you as mekely as  
we can that it lyke vnto your grette goodnes to fulfyllen in  
dede your wordes goodly / For we consydren and knowleche  
that we haue offendid and greuyd my lord melleke out of mesure  
so ferforth that we be not of power to make hym amendys /  
And therefore we oblygen vs and bynde vs and our frendes  
for to done alle hys wyll and commaundementis / But peras-  
venture he hath such angre and such wrath to vs warde  
by cause of our offence / that he wol enioyne vs such payne that  
we may not bere hit ne susteyne hit / And therefore noble lady

## The Tale of Chaucer

we beseech your noble pite to take such ayngement in this neede  
that we ne our frendes be not dyscredyt and destroyed thurgh  
our folye /

**O**ertes sayde dame prudence it is an harde thyng and  
right perpyous that a man put hym self al vicerly in  
arbitration and Jugement & in the myght and polber  
of his enemye / For Salamon sayth Beleue me and  
yeue credence to that I shal say / ne yeue neuer the polber ne go  
uernaunce of thy goodes / to thy sone / to thy wyf / to thy frende /  
ne to thy broder / ne yeue thou myght ne maystere ouer thy body  
whylest thou lyuest / No w sith that he defendeth that a man shold  
not yeue to his broder ne to his frende the myght of his body by a  
stronger reson he defendeth a man to yeue hym to hys enemye /  
And netheles I counceyl pou that ye mistrust not my lord / For  
I wote wel and knolwe veryly that he is dekonayr / meke / large  
and curteys and nothyng despyous ne cruelous of good ne ry  
ghtes / For there is no thyng in this world that he desireth more  
than worshyp and honour / Furthermore I knolwe and am full  
sure that he shal nothyng doo in this dede wyth out my counceyl  
And I shal so werke in this cause that by the grace of our lord  
god ye shal be reconciled vnto vs / Than sayde they wyth one  
voys / Worshypful lady we put vs and our goodes in your  
wyll and dysposition alle fully / And be redy for to come what  
day that it lyke to your noblesse to assygne vs for to make our  
obligacions and bondes also stronge as it shalle lyke vnto your  
goodnes that we molbe fulfyll the wyll of polb and of my lord  
Melkece / Whan dame prudence had herd the answers of this  
men / She had hem retorne agayn pruely / And she returned  
agayn to her lord Melkece and tolde hym how she fonde his ad  
uersaries ful repentant / knoblechyng ful colbly her synnes and  
trespaas / And how that they were redy to suffer al payne requy  
ryng hym of mercy and pite / Than sayd Melkece he is well  
worthyp to haue pardon and foryeuenes that excuseth hym not of  
hys synne / But knobleceyth and repenteth hym avyng Indul  
gence for his synne / Senek saith There is the remysyon & forye  
uenes / For the confessyon is neyghbour to Innocence / and therfor  
I assente and conforme me to haue pite / But it is good that  
we doo not wythout the wyll of our frendes /

## The Tale of Chaucer

**T**han was Prudence ryght glad and Joyeful and  
 sayd: certes syre ye haue wel and goodly answered  
 For ryght as by the counceyl assente and helpe of  
 your frendes ye haue styred to do kenge you and make  
 warre ryght so Wyth outen her counceyl shalle ye not accorde you  
 ne shue pes wyth your aduersaries / For the lawe sayth There  
 is no thyng so good by waye of kynde as a thyng to be vnbounde  
 by hym that it was bounde / And than dame prudence Wythout  
 delaye or taryng sent anon her messagers for her kyn and her  
 olde frendes whiche were trewe and wyse / And tolde hem by  
 ordre in presence of Melleke al this mater as is aboue exprestyd  
 and declared / And prayed hem that they wolde saye her aduise  
 and counceyl what were best to doo in thys nede / And when  
 Mellekes frendes had herd thys nede and taken her aduise and  
 deliberation of the forsayd mater and had examyned by grette  
 besynes and grette counceyl / they gaf ful counceyl for to haue  
 pes and reste / And that Melleke shold receyue wyth good  
 herte his aduersaries to foryeuenes and mercy / And when  
 dame Prudence had herd thassent of her lord Melleke and of  
 hys frendes she was wonderly glad in her herte and sayd / there  
 is a noble prouerbe that sayth / the goodnes that thou mayst doo  
 thys day do hit / and abyde not ne delaye it not tyl to morowe  
 And therfor I counceyl that ye sende your messagers such as be  
 dyscrete and wyse vnto your aduersaries / Tellynge hem on your  
 behalf that yf they wyl trete of pes and of accorde / that they  
 shawe hem wythout delay or taryng to come vnto vs / whiche  
 thyng performed was in dede / And when these trespassours  
 and repentyng folke of her folkes that is to saye the aduersaries  
 of melleke / had herd what thys messagers said vnto hem / they  
 were right glad & Joyful / and answered ful mekely & kengly  
 yeldyng graces & athynges to her lord melleke & to al his compa  
 ny / & shopen hem without ony delay to go wyth the messagers &  
 to obey the comaundement of her lord Melleke / And right anon  
 they toke her waye to her Lord Melleke / And right anon they  
 toke her waye to her lordes court and toke wyth hem somme of  
 her trewe frendes to make feyth for hem and for to be her  
 forolles / And when they were comen to the presence of  
 Melleke he sayd to hem thys wordes / Hit stondesth thus sayde

## The Tale of Chaucer

Melleke & soth it is that causeles & wythouten skyll & reson ye haue doon grete iniuries to me to my wyf pudence and to my doughter also / For ye haue entred in to my hous by violence and haue doon such outrage that al men knowe wel that ye haue deseruyd deth / And therfor wold I knowe of you whether ye wyll putte yow to punysshynge / And the chastysynge and the vengeance of thys outrage in the wyll of me and of my wyf or elles not /

**O** Han the wysest of hem thre answered for hem alle and sayde / Syr sayde he we knowe wel that we be unworthy to come to the court of so grete a lord and so worthy as ye be / For we haue so grete mystryken vs and haue offended and gylted in such wyse agaynst your hye lordshipp that trewly we haue deseruyd the deth / But yet for the grete goodnes and donaynte that alle the world wytnesseth of your persone / we submytte vs to the excellence and benygnyte of your gracious lordshipp / and besechyng you of your merciable pitie ye wyll considere our grete repentaunce & our bolde submyssyon and graunte vs foryeuene of our outrageous trespasses and offenses / For wel we knowen that your liberal grace & mercy stretchen fether in to goodnes / than don our outrageous gyltes and trespasses in to wyckednes / Al be hit that cursedly and dampnably we haue agilted and agreuyd your hye lordshipp /

**O** Han Melleke toke hem from the grounde ful benygnyly & receyued her oblygacions & bondes by her othes vpon her pledges & wordes / and assygned hem a certayn day to retorne vnto his court for to receyue & accepte the iugement that melleke wold comaunde to be don on hem by the causes aforesayd / which thynges ordeigned euery man returned to his owen hous / & whan dame prudence sawe her tyme she feyned & ayed her lord melleke / what vengeance he thought to take vpon his aduersaries / to which melleke answered & sayd certes I thynke & purpose me fully to dysheryte hem of alle that euer they haue and put hem in exyle for euermore / Certes sayde dame Prudence / This were a cruel sentence and moche agaynst reson / For ye be ryche ynough and haue none nede of other mennes goodes / And ye myght ful lyghtly in thys wyse gete

## The Tale of Chaucer

polb a ful couetous name / whiche is a bypous bypnyng and  
ought to be eschewed of euery good man / For after the worde of  
thapostle / Couetyse is the rote of al harmes / And therefore hit  
were better to polb to lese so moche good of your owne than for  
to take of her good in thys manere / For better it is to lese good  
wyth worshyp / than it is to wyne good wyth bypnyng and  
shame / And euery man ought to doo his dyspygence and besynes  
to gete hym a good name / And yet shall he not fooly lesse hym  
in keepyng of his good name / But he shal alle day enforcen  
to do somme thyng by whiche he may renouele or renelbe his good  
name / For it is wryton that the olde good boos of a man or  
good name is sone goon and passid whan it is not nelved ne  
renouelyd / And as touchyng that ye sayn / ye wol exple your  
aduersaries / that thynketh me moche agayn reason and out of  
mesure / consyderyng the polber that they haue yue polb vpon  
hem self / And yet it is wryton that he is worthy to lese his pry  
uilege that mysuseth the myght and the polber that is yue hym  
And I set cas that ye myght enioyne hem that payne by ryght  
and by lawe / whiche that I trowe ye may not doo / I say ye  
myght not put hit to execution / For parauenture than were hit  
like to retorne to the Watte as hit was before / And therefore  
yf ye wol that men doo polb okeysaunce ye must demene polb  
more curtyse / Thys is to saye ye must yue more espy penaunce  
and Iugement / For it is wryton that he that most curtysely  
commaundeth / to hym men moste obeye / And therefore I praye  
polb that in thys necessyte and in thys nede ye cast yow for to  
ouercome your herte / For Senek sayth / he that ouercometh  
hys herte / ouercometh thynges / And Tullyus sayth / There is  
nothyng so comendable in a grette lord as whan he is desonayr  
and meke / And appeesyth hym lightly / And I praye polb  
that ye wol nolle forbere to doo vengeance in suche a manere that  
your good name may be kept and conseruyd /  
And that men may haue cause and mater to prayse yow  
of pyte and of mercy / And that ye haue no cause to repent  
polb of thyng that is doon / For Senek sayth / He  
ouercometh an euill maner that repenteth hym of hys bye  
tore / Wherefore I praye polb lete mercy be in your herte / To  
theffect and to the entente that God almyghty haue mercy

## The Tale of Chaucer

on polb in his laste Jugement / For saynt James sayth in hys  
epysles/ Jugement wythout mercy shalbe doo to hym that hath  
no mercy on an other wyght /

**W**han Melkebe had herd the grette skylles and resons  
of dame Prudence and her wyse Informations and te-  
chynges his herte began tenclpne to the wyll of hys  
wyf considering her grette entente conformed hym anon  
and assented to werke after her counceyl / And thanked god of  
whom proceedeth alle goodnes and vertue / that hym had sente a  
wyf of so grette dyscrecion / And whan the day cam that hys  
aduersaryes shold apere in his presence / He spak to hem ful  
goodly and sayd in thys wyse / Al be hit so that of your pryde  
and presumption & my foly of your neglygence and unconnyng  
ye haue mysborne polb and trespassyd vnto me / yet for as my-  
kil as I see your grette humylite and that ye be sory & repentaunte  
of your gyltes hit constrayneth me to doo polb grace and mercy /  
Wherfor I receyue polb to my grace and foryeue you vterly alle  
the offences iniuries and wronges that ye haue don ayens me  
to thys effecte and to thys ende that / god of his endles mercy  
wyll at the day of my deying foryeue me my gyltes / that I  
haue trespassed to hym in thys worlde / For doubtles yf we be  
sory and repentaunte for our synnes and gyltes / the sight of  
our lord god is so fre and so mercyable that he wyll foryeue vs  
our gyltes and bringe vs to the blysse that neuer shalbe haue  
ende Amen /

Here endeth chaucers Tale of Melkebe and  
Prudence hys wyf and sophye his daughter /

## The Prologue

And begynneth the monkes prologue

**W**henne ended was the tale of melleke  
and of prudence and of her kengynge  
Our host sayd as I am faithful man  
and by the precious corps Madryan  
I had leuer thenne a barrel of ale  
That good leef my wyf had herde thys tale  
For she is nothyng of such pacience  
As was thys Mellekeus wyf Prudence  
By goddes bones wher I kete my knaues  
She bryngeth me the grete clobberd staups  
And cryeth sle the dogges euerychone  
And breke both bak and euery boon  
And yf that ony neyghbour of myn  
Wol not in chyrche to my wyf enclyn  
Or be so hardy to her to trespass  
Whan she cometh hom she rampeth in my face  
And cryeth fals colbard worke thy wyf  
By corpus dominus I wyll haue thy knyf  
And thou shalt haue my dystaf & goos spynn  
Ifw day tyl nyght she wyll thus begynne  
Alas she saith that eyr I was shap  
To wedde a mylkesop a colbard ape  
That wol be ouerled wyth euery wyght  
Thou darst not stonde by thy wyues ryght  
This is my lif/ but yf that I wold ryght  
And out atte dore anon I moot me dyght  
And ellys I am lost but yf that I  
Be like a wyldde lyon fool hardy  
I boote wel she wyll do me slee som day  
Som neyghbour and thenne goo my way  
For I am parbus wyth knyf in honde  
Al be hit that I dare not her wythstonde  
For she is byge in armes by my fayth  
That shal be fynde that her mysdoth or sayth  
But let vs passe alwaye from thys matere

## The Prologue

My lord? sir monke he sayd? he mery of chere  
For ye shall tellen a tale truly  
So wichester stondeth here fast by  
Ryde forth myn olben worde breke not our game  
But by my trouthe I knowe not your name  
Whether shal I calle you my lord? dan Iohan  
Or dan Thomas dan robert or dan Alton  
Or of what holbe he is by your fader kyn  
I wolbe to god? thou hast a ful fayr chyn  
It is a gentil pasture there thou goost  
Thou art not like a penaunce or a goost  
Up on my feythe thou art som offycere  
Som worthy seynt or som celeste  
For by my fader soule as to my dome  
Thou art a mayster Iohan thou arte at home  
No your chysterer ne no your nouice  
But a gouernour wyse and wyse  
And therewith of bialyn and of bonys  
A wel faryng? persone for the nonys  
I praye to god? geue hym confusion  
That fyrst he brought me to religion  
Thou woldest haue be a trefoul a right  
Haddist thou as grete leue as thou hast myght  
To performe al thy lust in engendrure  
Thou haddyst begoten many a creature  
Alas why werest thou so wyde a cope  
God? geue me sorow and I were pope  
Not only thou but euery myghty man  
Though he were shore hyghte vp on his pan  
Shold haue a wyf for al this world is lorn  
Religion hath take vp alle the corne  
Of trefynge and borel men be shympes  
Of feble trees there cometh wretched ympes  
This maketh that our heyres be so skendir  
And feble that they may not wel engendre  
This maketh that our wyues wyf assare  
Religious folke for they may better paye  
Of Venus payementis thanne molbe be

## The Prologue

God? boote no luffe burghe paye  
But he not wort? my lord? though I playe  
Ful ofte in game a soth haue I herd? saye  
This wort? monke take alle in pacience  
And? sayd? I wol doo my dyligence  
As fer as solowneth in to horeste  
To telle yow a tale or two or thre  
And? yf yow list to herken hiderwarde  
I wol you sayn of the lyf of seynt Edwarde  
Or elles tragedyes fyrst I wol telle  
Of whiche I haue an hondred? in my cille  
Tragedy is for to telle a certayn storie  
As olde bookes maken memorie  
Of hem that stonden in grette prosperite  
And? is falle out of hys degre  
In to mysery and? endyth? wretchydly  
And? they been kersed? compnyly  
Of / bi / feet whiche men clepen eyameton  
In prose eke ben endyted? many on  
And? in metre many a sondry wyse  
To thys ough? ynough to suffyse  
Nolw herkenyth yf yow lyst for to here  
But fyrst I beseeche you in thys matere  
Though I by ordre telle not thise thyngis  
Be hit of popes emperours or kyngis  
And? after her ages as men byrthen fynde  
But telle hem som byfore and? som behynde  
As it cometh to my remembraunce  
Haue me excusid? of myn ignoraunce

Here endyth the Monks prologue

# The Tale Of the Monke

Here begynneth the Tale



**H**Wyl bewayne in maner of tragedye  
The harme of hem that stoden in hys degre  
And fylten so that there nas no remedye  
To bryng hem out of her aduersyte  
For certayn wlen that fortune lyst to fle  
There may no man of her the cours wythholde  
Eke no man truste on blynde prosperyte  
With wate by this ensampil yonge and olde

At Lucifer though he an aungyl were  
And not a man at hym I Wyl begynne  
For though fortune may not aungel dere  
From hys degre yet fyl he for hys synne  
Down in to helle where he is yet ynne  
O lucifer bryghtest of aungellys alle  
Now art thou sathanas that mayst not flynnne  
Out of myserye wherke thou art falle

## The Tale of the monke

So Adam in the felde of damascene  
Wyth goddes olben syngre brought was  
And not bygoten of mannes sperme vncleane  
And welte al paradys saupng one tre  
Had neuer worldly man so hygh degree  
As Adam / til he for mys-gouernaunce  
Was druen out of his hye prosperite  
To labour and to helle and to myschaunce

So Sampson whyle that was anunciat  
By the aungel longe or his natyuite  
And was to god almyghty consecrat  
And stode in nobles whyle he myght see  
Was neuer such a nother as was he  
To speke of strengthe and therto hardynes  
But to his wyues tolde he his secre  
Thorough which he slough hym for wretchednes

Sampson thys noble and myghty champpon  
Without wepen saue his handes elwe  
He slough and al to rente the spoun  
Tolward his beddyng walkyng by the weye  
His fals wyf coude hym so plesse and prey  
Til she his counayl knelwe and she vntrelwe  
Onto his foos his counayl gan telwe  
And hym forsoke and toke an other nelwe

An hondred foyys toke Sampson for pre  
And al her tayles he to gyder bonde  
And sette the foyys tayles al on fyre  
For he in euery tayle hath put a bronde  
And they brente al the cornes in that bonde  
And her olyues and her vyues eek  
A thousand men eke he slouwe wyth his bonde  
And had no weppyn but an asse chek

Whan they were slayn so thristyd hym that he  
Was wel nygh horn for which he gan to prey

## The Tale Of the Monke

That godd wolde of his payne haue som pyte  
And sende hym drynke or ellis must he dye  
And of thys ass cheke that was so drye  
Out of a ljang toth sprang anon a welke  
Of whiche he dranke ynough shortly to seye  
Thus halpe hym godd / as iudicium can telle

By ferey force at gasa on an nyght  
Maugre the philistynes of that Cyt  
The gates of the towne he hath by plyght  
And on his back y carreyd hem hath he  
High on an hille where as men myght hem see  
O nobyl and myghty sampson leef and dere  
Had thou not tolde to hymmen thy sece  
In alle thys world ne hath he thy pere

This sampson neythyr spide dranke ne wyn  
Ne on his hede cam rasour non ne shere  
By precept of the messenger deupne  
For al his strengthes in hys hertis were  
And fully twenty yere by yere  
Of ysrael he had the gouernaunce  
But after sone shal he becom many a tere  
For hymmen shal bryng hym to myschaunce

Unto his lemman dalida he tolde  
That in hys hertis al his strengthe lay  
And falsly to his foos hym he solde  
And sleppynge in her larm vpon a day  
They made to clyppe or shere his hert alway  
And made his fomen alle his craft aspien  
And when that they hym fond in such aray  
They bond hym faste and put out his eyen

But or his hertis were clyppid or shawe  
There was no bonde that myght hym bynde  
But now is he put in pryson in a caue  
Where as they made hym at the qerne grynde

## The Tale of the monke

O noble sampson strengest of mankynde  
O whylom Juge in glory and in ryghtes  
Now mayst thou wepyng wyth thy eyes blynde  
Sith thou art from wele falle in to wretchidnes

The ende of thys captyf was as I shal say  
His fomen maken a feste vpon a day  
And made hym as theyr fool before hem playe  
And thys was in a tempyl of grete arraye  
But atte last he made a foul fraye  
For he elbo possis shoke and made hym falle  
And down fyl the temple and al there it laye  
And stob hym self and eke his fomen alle

This is to say the prynces euerychon  
And eke thre thousand lordes were their slayn  
Wyth fallynge of the grete tempyl of stone  
Of sampson wol I nomore sayn  
With bare of this ensampil olde and playn  
That noman telle her counceyl to her wyfys  
Of suche thyng as they wolde haue secreet sayn  
Yf that hit touche her hymmes or her lynes

**O**f hercules the souerayn conquerour  
Sprynge his werkes laude & his renoun  
For in his tyme of strengthe he hure the flour  
He slough and caste the skynne of the lyoun  
And of Centaurus leyde the lost a down  
He arpie slough the cruel bryddes felle  
He the goldeyn apples cast fro the dragon  
He dwlbe out Cerberus the hound of helle

He slough the cruel tyraunt busirus  
And made his hors to frette hym flesh & boon  
He slough the very serpent venemous  
Of Achilles elbo hornes brake he that one  
And he slough Eacus in a caue of stoon  
He slough the geaunt Anthus the stronge

## The Tale Of the Monke

He slough the gryssly boor and that anon  
And bare his hede vpon his necke longe

Was neuer bygght sythe the world began  
That slough so many monstres as dyd he  
Thowgh the wyde worlde his name can  
What for his strengthe and his counte  
And euery reue went he for to see  
He was so stronge that noman myght hym sette  
And both worldis endys seyth Trophe  
In steed of boundis he of bras a pylle sette

A lemman had this nobyl champpon  
That myght depaynt as fressh as may  
And as clerkys make mention  
She hath hym sent a sherte fressh and gay  
Alas this sherte alas and wel alway  
Enuencynge was subtilly wyth alle  
That er he had wored hit half a day  
It made his flessch al fro his bones falle

But natheles som clerkys hyr excusen  
By one that hight nessus that hit maked  
As he may I wyl her not accusen  
But on his body the shert he wored al nakyd  
Tyl the flessch was wyth the benym slakyd  
And whan he sawe non other remedye  
In hoot colys he hath hym self takyd  
For wyth no benym delyed he to dye

Thus start this worthy myghty hercules  
To who may trust in fortune ony thowbe  
For hym that foloweth al this world of pices  
Or he he ware is of a leyde ful colbe  
Ful wyse is he that hym self can knolbe  
Be ware for whan that fortune lyst to glose  
Thenne wayteth she her man down to thowbe  
By such a ware as he wold lest suppose

## The Tale of the monke

**O** myghty trone the precious treasure  
The glorious sceptre & the ryal mageste  
That had the kyng Nabugodonosor  
Wyth tongue vnnethe may describid be  
He threwe Iban Iherusalem that cyte  
The besseyl of the temple he wyth hym lade  
At Babilon was his souerayn see  
In whiche his glory and his delyte he had

The fayrest chyldren of the blood ryal  
Of Iherusalem he dyd doo golde anon  
And made eche of hem to be his thral  
Amonge al other danyel was one  
That was the wysest chyld of euerychone  
For he the dreames of the kyng expounded  
There as in Caldey clerkes were there none  
That wyse to what syn his dreame solued

This proude kyng let make a statu of golde  
Sixti cubytes long and seuen in bryde  
To whiche ymage bothe yonge and olde  
Commaunded he to boue and haue in drede  
Or in a furnes / ful of flames rede  
He shold be dede that wolde not obeye  
But neuer wolde accorde to that dede  
Daniel ne his yonge felowes thre

This kyng of kynges proude and elate  
He wende god that sitteth in mageste  
He myght not bereue of his astate  
But sodenly he lost his dignyte  
And like a leste hym semed for to be  
And eet he as an oxe and lay there out  
In rayn wyth wyld bestes walkyd he  
Tyl a certayn tyme was come about

And like an eghe fetteris were his fetis  
And nayles like hydes clalys were

## The Tale of The Monke

Godþe releyndþe hym at certeyn yeres  
Andþe pasþe hym wytte & than wytte many a yer  
He thankydþe godþe andþe euer his lpf in fer  
Was he to doo a mys or more trespass  
Andþe er that he layde was on his kere  
He knelbe that godþe was ful of myght & grace

**I**n soone whiche that byght Balthasar  
That held the regne after his fader day  
He by his fader coude not helbaar  
For proude he was of herte andþe of araye  
Andþe eke an ydolastir was he ay  
His high astate assuredþe hym in pryde  
But fortune cast hym down & there he lay  
And sodenly his regne can deuyde

A feste he made vnto his lordis alle  
Op on a tyme he made them blythe he  
Andþe than his offycers gan he calle  
Goth beyngþe forth the vesselles quodþe he  
Whiche that my fader in his prosperyte  
Out of the temppel of iherusalem keraft  
Andþe to our goddys thanke be  
Of honour that our eldris wyth be last

His wyf his lordis andþe his concubynys  
Ay dronken whys her appetitis last  
Out of thys noble vesselles sendry wynys  
Andþe on a wal thys kyngþe his eyen cast  
Andþe salbe an hondþe armeles that broot fast  
For fer of whiche he quok andþe sighedþe sore  
This hond that balthasar made so sore agast  
Wrote mane / techel / phares andþe nomore

In al that bonde magicien was there non  
That coude expolne what thys letter ment  
But danyel expolnedþe it anon  
Andþe saydþe kyng / godþe to thy fader sent

## The Tale Of the Monke

Glorie and honour regne tresour and rent  
And he was proude and nothyng god he dunt  
And therefore grete wrath god vpon hym sent  
And hym keraft the regne that he had

He was out cast of mannyes company  
Wyth assys was his habytation  
And eet he as a best in wet and dry  
Tyl that he knelwe by grace and by reison  
That god of heuen hath domynation  
ouer euery regne and euery creature  
And than had god of hym compassyon  
And hym restorpd his regne and hys figure

Ekke thou that art his sone art proude also  
And knowest al thys thynge pryncely  
And art rebel to god and his fo  
Thow drank eek of his vessels holdly  
Thy wyf eek and thy benchys synfully  
Drunk of the same vessels sondry wyngys  
And serped fals goddis cursydly  
Therefore to the shapyn grete payne is

This bond was sent fro god that on the wall  
Wroot mane trefel phares trust me  
Thy regne is doon thou weypte not all  
Occupyd is thy regne and hit shal be  
To medes and to perciens quod he  
And that same nyght the kyng was slawe  
And darpus occupied his degre  
Though he thereto had neyther right ne salwe

Lordyngees lere by ensaumples molbe ye take  
Holt that in lordshyp is no sikyrnes  
For when that fortune wyl a man forsake  
He leryth alway his regne and his ryches  
And eke his frendis both more and les  
And what man hath frendys thorough fortune

## The Tale of The Monke

Myss hap wol make hym enemyes 3 gesse  
This prouerbe is ful soth and ful commune

**C**Enobia of Palmyre quene.  
As wyrteth percyens of her nobles  
So worthy was in armys and so kene  
That no wyght passyd her in hardynes  
Ne in kynage ne in non other gentilnes  
Of kynges blood of Perce is she descendyd  
I say that she had not most fayrnes  
But of her shappe she myght not be amendyd

From her chyldhod 3 fynde that she fled  
Offyce of womman and to woode she went  
And many a wyldes hertes blood she shed  
Wyth arowes brood that she to hem sent  
She was so swyft that she anon hem hent  
And when that she was elder she wolde kille  
Egouns livers and livers al to rent  
And in her armes welde hem at her wille

She durst wyld bestes denys seke  
And renne in the mounteyn al the nyght  
And slepe vnder a bussh and she coude eke  
Wraustel by very force and very myght  
Wyth ony yonge man were he neuer so wyght  
There myght nothyng in her armes stonde  
She kepte her maydenhode from euery wyght  
To no man denyed she to be bonde

But atte last her frendes hath her marryed  
To Onedac a prynce of that contree  
Al were it so that she hem longe taryed  
And ye shul vnderstonde how that she  
Hadde such fantasies as had she  
But netheles when they were knyt in fere  
They luyd in joye and in felicitye  
For eche of them had other leef and dere

## The Tale Of the Monke

Save o thyng that she wolde neuer assent  
By no wey that he shold by her lye  
Unt onys for it was her pleynt entent  
To haue a chylde the world to multiplye  
And also sone as she myght aspre  
That she was not wyth chylde wyth that dede  
Than wolde she suffer hym do his fantasie  
Eft sony and nat but onys out of drede

And yf she were wyth chylde at that cast  
Nomore shold he pleye that game  
Tyl fully / xl dayes were y past  
Thenne wolde she onys suffer hym the same  
Al were thys Onedak wyld or tame  
He gat no more of her for thus she sayde  
It was to wyrys lecherye and shame  
In oher cas yf men wyth hem playde

Two sonys by thys Onedak had she  
The which she kept in vertue and letture  
But now into our tale turne we  
I say that so worshipful a creature  
And wyse therwyth and large with mesure  
So penybil in warre and curteis eke  
He more labour myght in better endure  
Was none though al this world men wolde seke

Her rich aray he myght not be tolde  
As wel in vestyl as in her clothyng  
She was al cladd in perry and in golde  
And eke she lest not for none hautyng  
To haue of sondry tongis folk knowyng  
When that she leysur had and for to entende  
To lerne tokis was al her lykyng  
How she in vertu her lyf myght dyspende

And shortly of thys story for to tete  
So doughty was her husband as she

## The Tale of The Monke

That they conqueryd many regnes grete  
In the orpente wyth many a fayr cyte  
Apertenaunt vnto the maiesste  
Of rome and wyth strengthe held hem fast  
Ne neuer myght her fomen doo her fle  
Al the wythes that Onedackys dayes last

Her luttell wyf so lyst hem for to rede  
Agayn Sapor the kyng and other moo  
And how al thys proces fyl in dede  
Why she conqueryd & what tittle she had thereto  
And after of her myschance and of her woo  
How that she was besegyd and y take  
Eat hym to my mayster Petrarke goo  
That wyrteth ynolde of thys I undertake

Whenne Onedack Was ded she myghtyly  
The rems held and wyth her olde hond  
Agaynst her foos she fought treibly  
That there nas prync ne kyng in al that londe  
But were glad yf they that grace fonde  
That she ne shold by on his londe lverre  
With her they made a lounce by londe  
To be in pees and let hem ryde and pleye

The emperour of rome claudius  
Ne hym before the Romayn Galpens  
Ne durst neuer be so courageous  
Ne non ermyne ne none egypciens  
Ne surren ne none arabien  
Within the felde that durst with her fyght  
Lest that she wold hem with her handes slay  
O wyth her meyne put hem to flyght

In kynges habyt wente her sonnes two  
As leynes of her rems alle  
And hermanno and titamallo  
Her namys were as perciens hem calle

## The Tale Of the Monke

But ay fortune hath in her hony galle  
This myghty quene may no whyle endure  
Fortune out of regne made her to falle  
To wretchydnes and to mysaventure

Aurilian Isenne that the gouernaunce  
Of Rome cam in his boundis libere  
He shope vp on thys quene to doo kengeance  
And wyth his legyons he toke his waye  
Toward Crenobie and shortly for to seye  
He made her flee and at the laste her bent  
And feteryd her and eke her chyldren libere  
And wan the londe and home to come he went

Amonge othyr thyngis that he wan  
Her chare that of gold was brought & perre  
This grete womyn thys aurilpan  
Hath such hym lad that for men shold see  
Before his tryumphe walkyd she  
Wyth goldyn chynces on her necke hangynge  
Crowned she was as aftir her degre  
And ful of perre charged her clothyng

Alas fortune she that whyle was  
Dredeful to kynges and to Emperours  
Now galbrish al the peple on her alas  
And she that helmyd was in stark stouris  
And wan by force to wnes strong and touris  
Shal on her bedd now bere auctempte  
And she that bare the septer ful of flouris  
Shal bere a dystaf her cost for to quyte

**O**f mylane grete barnabo viscount  
God of delyte and scourge of lumbarde  
Why shold nat I thy fortune aounte  
Synce in estate thou chylden were so hye

## The Tale of The Monke

Thy brothyr sone that was thy doubtl alye  
For he thy newelbe was and sone in lalbe  
Wythim his pryson made the to dye  
But why ne hold not I that thou were slalbe

**O**f the erle huglyn of pyse the langour  
There may no tongue telle for pite  
But hitil out of pyse stondyth a tour  
In which tour in pryson put was he  
And wyth hym his hitil chyldren thre  
The eldest skarsly fyue yere was of age  
Alas fortune it was grete cruelte  
Suche byrdes for to put in suche a cage

Dampned he was to dyen in that pryson  
For Roger which bysshop was of pyse  
Had on hym made a fals subgestyon  
Thowgh which the peple gan on hym aryse  
And put hym in pryson in suche a wyse  
As ye haue herd and mete and drynke he hadde  
So smal that wel thynethe it may suffyse  
And therbyth al it was ful poure and lude

And on a day it he fyl that in that hour  
When that his mete was wont to be brought  
The gayler shytte the doris of the tour  
He herde it wel but he spack right nought  
And in his herte anon there fyl a thought  
That they for hungr wolde do hym to dyen  
Alas quod he alas that I was brought  
Therbyth the teis fyl from his eyen

His yonge sone that thre yere was of age  
Wnto his fader he sayde why doo ye wepe  
Whenne wol our Gayler bryng our potage  
Is there no morsel breed that ye do kepe  
I am so hungry that I may not slepe  
Hold wolde god that I myght slepe curre

## The Tale Of the Monke

Than shold no hungr in my wombe crepe  
There is no thyng than bred that me lber leupe

Thus day by day thys chylde gan to crye  
Tyl in his faders barm a doun it lay  
And sayd fare wel fader I mot dye  
And kyssed his fader and deyde the same day  
And when the woful fader dede hym say  
For wo his armys he gan to byte  
And sayd alas fortune and welalbay  
Thy fals Wyfe my wo all may lyte

This other chylde wende that for hungr it was  
That he his armes gnelve and not for woo  
And sayd fader doo not so alas  
But rather ete the flessch Upon vs albo  
Our flessch thou gaf vs take our flessch vs fro  
And ete ynough ryght thus the chylde sayde  
And after that lyth ynn a day or tibo  
They leyde hem doun in his lappe and deyde

Hym self dyspeyryd eke for hungr starf  
Thus ended the myghty erle of pyse  
From high estate fortune albaye hym carf  
Of thys tragedie it ought I nough suffyse  
Who so wyl here it in a lenger wyse  
Redyth the grete poet of ytable  
That hight daunte for he can hit deuise  
Fro poynt to poynt nat on word wyl he fayle

**A** though that nere were as viciuous  
As eny fende that lieth ful & lve adoun  
Yet he as tellyth vs suetonius  
Al thys World had in subiection  
Bothe est and west and septentrion  
Of Rubies / saphires and of perles white  
Were al his clothys brollyd vp and doun  
For he in gemmys gretly gan delyte

## The Tale of The Monke

More delycat more pompons of aray  
More proude was neuer emperour than he  
That yllke cloth that he had liveryd o day  
After that tyme he nolde it neuer see  
Nettis of golde threde had he grette plente  
To fyssh in Tyber whan hym lyst to pleye  
His lustis were as calbe in his degre  
For fortune as his frende wolde hym okeye

He Rome brent for his dilycacye  
The senatours he slough vpon a day  
To seer how that thomen wolde wepe and crye  
And slough his brothyr and by his suster lay  
His moder made he in a pytyous aray  
For he her wombe lette slytte to be holde  
Wher he concyued was so belalbay  
That he so lytel of hys moder tolde

No teris out of his eyen for that sight  
He cam but sayd a fayr woman was she  
Grette wonder is that he coude or myght  
We domesman of her dede beautye  
The kyn to bryng hym commaunded he  
And drank anon none other wo he made  
Whanne myght is ioynd vnto cruelte  
Alas to depe wol the kynem lade

In yowth a mayster had thys emperour  
To teche hym letture and curtesye  
For of moralyte he was the flour  
As in his tyme but yf his tokes he  
And whyles his maister had of hym maistrye  
He made hym so conynge and so souple  
That long tyme it was or tyrannye  
Or ony vyce durste in hym vncouple

Seneca his mayster was of whiche I deuyse  
By cause Nero had of hym such drede

## The Tale of the monke

For he for his byres bold: hym chastys  
Dyscretly as by word and not by dede  
Spre he wold: say an emperour moot nede  
Be vertuous and hate Tyranny  
For which he made hym in a bath to blede  
On bothe his armys til he must dye

This new had: els of a custumaunce  
In yongthe agens his mayster to ryse  
Which afterward hym thought a grette greuaunce  
A cause he ofte wold: hym chastys  
Therefore he made hym dye in thys wyse  
To chese in a bath to dye in thys manere  
Rathyr than to haue ano her turmentise  
And thus hath new slayn his mayster dere

Now fpe it so that fortune lyste no longer  
The hygh pryde of Nero to cherysse  
For though he were strong yet was she stronger  
She thought thus by god: I am to nyx  
To sette a man that is fulfyllid: of vice  
In hys degre and an Emperour hym calle  
By god: out of his sette I wyl hym trye  
Whan he leste beneth sonest shal he falle

The peple was by on hym on an nyght  
For his default and whan he it asprede  
Out of his dores anon he hath hym dysprede  
Alone and there he wende haue be alpede  
He enockyd: fast a id: ay the more he cryde  
The fastyr shyt they the dorps alle  
Tho wylt he wel he had: hym self begyled  
And wente his way no lengir durst he calle

The peple cryde and rombled: by and down  
That with his eris he herde how that they sayde  
Where is thys fals tyrant thys newon  
For feet ful near out of his wynde he cryde

## The Tale of The Monke

And to his goddis pitously he preyde  
For socour but it myght not be tyde  
For drede of thys hym thought that he deyde  
And ran in to a gardyn hym to hyde

And in thys gardyn fond he chorles tiber  
And spyttinge by a fyre grete andy reed  
And to the chorles tibe he gan to prey  
To sle hym and to gird of his heed  
That to his body whan he were ded  
Weere no despyte don for his defame  
Hym self he thought he coude no better rede  
Of whiche fortune wolde he and had game

**W**As neuwe Capteyn vnder a kynge  
That regnes mo put in subiection  
Ne stronger was in felde of al thyng  
As in his tyme ne gretter of renoun  
Ne more pompous in high presumption  
Than Othpurn whiche fortune ay kyste  
So furiously ladde hym vp andy down  
Tyl that he ded was or that he lyst

Not only that thys world had of hym albe  
For lesynge of rykes andy lyberte  
But he made euery man reue his salbe  
Nabugodonosor was lord sayde he  
None oher gode shold honoured be  
Aynst his best there dar no myght trespas  
Sawe in bethulpa a strong cite  
Where Elpachym was prest of that place

But take hewe of the deth of Othpurn  
Amyd his host he dronke lay al nyght  
Wyth in his tent large as is a barn  
And yet for al his pompe and al his myght  
Judyth a woman as he lay spayght  
Sleeping his bed of smote andy fro hys tent

## The Tale of the monke

Ful pryncely she scale from euery wyght  
And wyth his hede into her town she wente

**W**hat nedith it of kyng Antiochus  
To telle his hygh and ryal maieste  
His high pryde his werk benemus  
For such another man nas neuer as he  
Redyth what that he was in Machabe  
And redyth the proude werkyn that he sayde  
And why he fyl from his prosperite  
And in an hyl how wretchidly he deyde

Fortune hym hadde enhaunsid so in pryde  
That verily he wende he myght attayne  
Unto the sterys by on euery syde  
And in a balauce to weye eche mounteyn  
And al the steds of the see resteyn  
And goddis peple had he most in hate  
Them wolde he sle in tourment and in payn  
Wenyng that god ne myght his pryde abate

And for that Nychamore and Tymothe  
Whiche yelwes were benausid myghtyly  
Unto the yelwes such an hate had he  
That he had grethpyd his chare ful hastely  
And swoot and sayd ful despitously  
Unto Jerusalem he wolde eftone  
To wreke his yre on hit ful cruelly  
But of his purpos was he let ful sone

God for his manace hym sore smoot  
With inuisible wounde ay incurable  
That in his guttes carf so and boot  
That his wyndes were importable  
And certenly the wreke was resonable  
For many a mannys guttis dyd he payne  
But from his purpos cursid and dampnable  
For al his smert he nolde hym resteyne

## The Tale of The Monke

But sudn anon perceyven his hoost  
And sodenly or he than was waar  
God dauntid al his pryde and al his hoost  
For he so sore fyl out of his chare  
That al his lymmys and his skyn to tare  
So that he ne myght goo ne ryde  
But in a chayer men about hym bare  
Al for brosyd bothe bak and syde

The breake of god hym smote so cruelly  
That in his body lyeckyd wormes crept  
And therewith al he stank so horribly  
That none of al his meyne that hym kept  
Whether that he woke or ellys slept  
He myght not of hym the synke endure  
And in this myschief he wayled and eke wepte  
And knelde god lord of every creature

To al his hoost and to hym self also  
Ful walfom was the synke of his carren  
No man myght hym here to ne fro  
And in his synke and in his horrible payn  
He starf ful wretchydly on a mounteyn  
Thus hath this robber and thys homyade  
That many a man made to wepe and pleyne  
Such guerdon as belongeth unto pryde

**T**he story of alisaunder is so comune  
That every wight that hath discrecyon  
Hath herd somwhat or al of his fortune  
This wyde worlde as in conclusion  
He wan by strengthe and his renoun  
They were glad for wees unto hym sende  
The pryde of man and hote he leyde a down  
Where so he cam in to the worldys ende

Comparyson myght yet neuer be maad  
Betwyx hym and another conquerour

## The Tale of the monke

For al this worlde for drede of hym hath quakid  
He was of knyghthod & of freedom flour  
Fortune hym made the heir of hygh honour  
Saue wyh & wommen no thyng myghe aswage  
His hygh entent in armes and labour  
So was he ful of buyng courage

What pryde were it to hym though I you tolde  
Of daryus and of a hundred thousand mo  
Of prynces/erles/and kyngys holde  
Which he conquerde and brought to bo  
I say as fer as a man may ryde or go  
The world was his what shold I more deuyse  
For though I wrote and tolde you euery mo  
Of his knyghthod it myght not suffyse

En yere he reigned as I rede in machabe  
Philipis sone of Maccdone he was  
That first was kyng of grece that countre  
O worthy gentyl Alisaunder allas  
That euery shold the felle succe a cas  
Empyrysonde of thy folk thou were  
Thy spe fortune hath tourned me to an aas  
And yet for the ne wepte she neuer a tear

Who shal yee men terys to compleyne  
The deth of gentilnes and of franchise  
That al the world belodde in his demeyne  
And yet hym thought it myght not suffyse  
So ful was his courage of high emprise  
Allas who shal me helpe to endyte  
Fals fortune and poison to dispise  
The which of al thys woo I wyte

**B**y wysedom manhod and high labour  
From humblyt dedde to rial maieste  
Up roos he Julius the conquerour  
That al the ocident by lande and see

## The Tale of The Monke

By strengthe of hondz or ellys by trete  
And vnto rome made hem trybutary  
And sith of Rome Emperour was he  
Tyl that fortune bey his aduersary

O myghty Cesar that in Thessaly  
Aynst Pompeius fader thyn in lalbe  
That of the orient had the chyualry  
As fer as that the day begynneth to dalbe  
Them thorugh knyghthod hast take & slalbe  
Saue felbe folk that wyth Pompeius fledde  
Throu which thou puttist al the orient in aibe  
Thanke fortune that so Wel the spedde

But now a litil Whyle I wyl feldaye  
This pompeius this noble gouernour  
Of rome which that fledde at thys batayle  
I say one of his men a fals traytour  
His seide of smoot to Wynne hym fauour  
Of Julius and to hym the seide broughte  
Alas Pompeie of the orient conquerour  
That fortune vnto such a fyn the broughte

To win: agayn repprith Julius  
Wyth his tryumpe laureat ful hie  
But on a tyme brutus cassius  
That erer had of his hie estat enuy  
Ful pryncely had made conspyracye  
Aynst thys Julius in subtil wyse  
And cast the place in which he shold dye  
With koydehyns as I shal you deuyse

This Julius vnto the Capytoly went  
Op on a day as he was wont to gon  
And in the capitol anon hym sent  
This fals brutus and his other foon  
And sekyd hym wyth koydehyns anon  
Wyth many a wounde & thus they let hym lye

## The Tale of the monke

But neuer grunted he at no stwook but con  
Or ellys at tWo but yf his story lye

So manly was thys Iulys of lerte  
And so wel soupd; estatly honeste  
That though his dedly woundis so sore smert  
His mantel ouer his hupis cast he  
For no man shold; see his prynces  
And; as he lay in dypng; on a traunce  
And; wyse leryly that dy; shold; he  
Of honeste yet had; he remembraunce

I can to the thys story I recomende  
And; to Sueton and; to Salery also  
That of thys story wryten word; and; ende  
Holb that thys conquerours tWo  
ffortune was first a frende & sythen a foo  
Noman truste vp on her fauour longe  
But haue lere in a wyse for euermd;e  
Witnes on al the conquerours stronge

**O** Noble o worthy petro ghorre of spayne  
Whom fortune held so hye in mageste  
Wel oughten men thy pyetous deth compleyne  
Out of thy honde thy brother made the fle  
And; after at a siege by subtilte  
Thou wert betrayed & lad vp to his tence  
Wher as he wyth his olbn hond; sholde the  
Succedynge in thy regne and; in thy rente

The felde of snolbe wyth thegle of black thern  
Caught wyth the lymetodde coburd; as a glade  
He halbe thys cursydnes and; al thys synne  
The wyckedy nest was werker of thys nede  
Not charles Olyuer that toke ap lide  
Of trouth and; honoure / But of armoryke  
Genelk Olyuer corrupte for mede  
Brought thys worthy kyng; in such a bryke

## The Tale of the Monke

O worthy petro kyng of Cyprre also  
That alysaunder iban by hyr maysterre  
Ful many an lither loughrest thou ful wo  
Of whiche thyn olven sieges had eny  
And for no thyng but for thy chyualrye  
They in thy bedde han slayn the by the morolbe  
Thus can fortune wel gouerne and? gye  
And? out of Joye bryng men to sorolbe

**T**he rich cresus whylom kyng of lyde  
Of whiche cresus / cirus sore hym drede  
Yet was he caught amyd al his pryde  
And to brene men to the fyre hym ladde  
But such a rayn down fro the firmament shad?  
That quyre the fire and made hym to scape  
But to be lbaar yet no grace he had?  
Tyl fortune on the gabolbis made hym gape

When he ascaped was he coude nat stynte  
For to begyn a nelke aray agayn  
He wend wel for that fortune hym sent  
Such hap that he ascapyd thorough the rayn  
That of his foos he myght not be slayn  
And eke a sleuyon vpon a nyght he mette  
Of whiche he was so proude & eke so feyn  
That in vengeance he al his herte sette

Wpon a tre he was as hym thought  
There iupiter hym wessh both back and syde  
And phebue eke a fayr tolyayl hym brought  
To drye hym with & therewith West his pryde  
And to his doughter that stode hym besyde  
Whiche that he knelbe in high sentence habounde  
He had her telle what it signyfyed?  
And she his drempes right thus expolned?

The tre quod she the gabolbis is to mene  
And iupiter betokenyth snolb and? rayn

## The Tale of the Monke

And phobus with his to wel so clene  
Betokenyth the sonne temps soth to sayn  
Thou shalt an hanged be fader ardeyn  
Rayn shal the wasshe & sonne shal the drye  
Thus she warnyd hym ful plat & ful pleyne  
His doughter that callyd was phange

An hanged was cressus the proude kyng  
His ryal trone myght hym not auayle  
Tragedy is none other maner thyng  
No can in synnyng open ne helvayle  
But for that fortune alday wyl assayle  
Wyth bulbaat stroke the regnes that be proude  
For wsen men trust in her than wol she fayle  
And couer her bryght face vnder a cloude

Here endeth the Monkes tale

## The prologue

Here foloweth the prologue  
Of the nonnes preest

**H**O quod the knyght good sir nomore of this  
That ye haue sayd is right ynough ybis  
And mykyl more for litil heuynes  
Is ryght ynough to mykyl folke I ges  
I sepe for me it is a grete disease  
Where as men haue be in walthe and ease  
To here of her sodeyn fal alas  
And the contrarie is Joye and solas  
As when a man hath ben in pour estate  
And clymbeth vp and weyeth fortunate  
And there abydeyth in prosperite  
Suche thyng is gladsom as thynketh me  
And of suche thyng were good for to telle  
Ye quod our host by seynt poules selle  
Ye say right soth / this monke clappeth loud  
He spak holi fortunz couerd wyth a cloude  
I wote neuer what / & als of a tragedye  
Right noli ye herde / & perde no remedye  
It is for to felbaylen ne compleyne  
That / that is don / and als it is a payne  
As ye haue seyde to here of heuyne  
Syr monke no more of thys so godi you bless  
Pour tale anoyth al thys compaign  
Suche talkyng is not worth a butter fly  
For there in is there no dysport ne game  
Wherefore sir monk or dan Piers by our name  
I pray you hercely tel vs sumwhat elles  
For sikerly nere clynkyng of your lippes  
That on your brydyl songyn on euery spede  
By heuyng kyng that for vs al dyde  
I shold or thys haue fallen down for shepe  
Al though the stough had neuer be so depe  
Than had pour tale al be tolde in weyn  
For certenly as that thys clerkys seyn

## The prologue

Where as a man may haue non audyence  
Not helppth it to telle his sentence  
And wel I boote the substaunce is in me  
Yf ony thyng shal wel reportyd be  
Syr say somwhat of huntynge I you praye  
May quod this monke I haue no lust to playe  
Now lette another telle as I haue tolde  
Thin spake our host with rite speche & holde  
And sayde to the nonnes preest anon  
Com ner thou preest come hider thou syr John  
Tel vs such thyng as may our hertes glade  
Be hlythe though thou ryde vpon a jade  
What though thy hors be foul and lene  
Yf he wol serue the/recke the not a bene  
Look that thy herte be mery euer moo  
Yes syr quod he yes host so moot y goo  
But I be mery I wys I wyl be blamyd  
And right anon his tale he hath attampyd  
And thus he sayd to vs euerychone  
This wete preest this goodly man sir John

Here endeth the prologue of the nonnes preest

# The Tale of The Nonnyes preest

And here begynneth his tale



**A** thoure wydow som dale y stept in age  
Was somtyme dwellyng in a cotage  
Beside a groue stondyng in a dale  
This wydow of which I telle you my tale  
Syn that day that she was last a wyf  
In patience ledde a ful symple lyf  
For tyll was her catel and her rent  
By husbondry of suche as godd her sent  
Six fonde her self and eke her doughteryn thre  
The large sollys had she and nomo  
The kyne & eek a sheep that hight malle  
Wel soty was her hous and eek her halle  
In which she eet many a slender meel  
Of poynaunt salwe ne knelwe she neuer adde  
Ne deynre mortel passyd thorough her throte

## The Tale of The Monnyes preest

Her dyet was accordaunt to her cote  
Replecion ne made her neuer syke  
A temperat dyet was her physyke  
And exceps and certis suffysaunce  
The golde let her no thyng for to daunce  
Ne Apoplexie shent not her ked  
No wyne ne drank she neyther wyght ne need  
Her bod was most scrupd with whit & black  
Myll & crown bred in which she fond no lack  
Secndy facon and somtyme an ey or tibe  
For she was as it were a maner dyc  
A yerd she had enclosyd al about  
With seckis and drye dycked wythout  
In which she had a col high & cuntable  
In al the bond of crolbyng nas his wer  
His voyce was merier than the mery organ  
On masse dayes that in the chyrche goon  
Wel sikker was his crolbyng in his loge  
Than is a cloke or in any abbeys or boze  
By nature he welde eke assenaon  
Of the equynocion in the toun  
For when degrees / xv / Were ascendyd  
Than wel he that it myght not be amendyd  
Hys omb was redder than the fyn coral  
And brackyd as it had be a castel wal  
His hyl was black as ony geet it shoon  
Lyke asure were his legges and his won  
His nayles wyghter than the silf shour  
And like the burnedy gold was his colour  
This gentyl col hadde in his gouernaunce  
Seuen knyghtes to doo al his plesaunce  
Which were his siseris & his paramouris  
And wonder like to hym as of couris  
Of which the fayryst helbyd in the throte  
Was clepyd fair damysel Perceforte  
He fekered her an hundred tyme a day  
And she hym plesith al that euer she may  
Curys she was discrete and delonayr

## The Tale of The Nonnyes preest

Andz compenabyll & huar her self so fayre  
Syn the tyme that she was seuenyght olde  
That trewlych she hath the herte in holde  
Of chaunteclerps lokyngz in euery lith  
He buyth her so that wel was hym therlwyth  
But such a Joye it was to here them synge  
Whan the bryght sonne gan to sprynge  
In swete accorde my leef is fer in honde  
For that tyme as I haue vnderstonde  
Bestys & byrds coude speke andz synge  
Andz it so fyndethat in the dalvenynge  
As Chauntecler amongz his wyngys alle  
Sat on his perche that was in the halle  
Andz next hym sat his fayre Pertelote  
This chauntecler gan to grone in his throte  
As a man in his dreame is dretchpyd sore  
And whan that Pertelot thus herde hym rote  
She was a gaste andz sayde herte dore  
What eyleth yow to grone in thys manere  
Ye be a very slepar fy for shame  
Andz he answerd thus andz sayd madame  
I pray yow that ye take it not in greet  
By god I mette I was in such myschere  
Right now that yet myn herte is sore a fright  
Noli god quod he my siben retche a right  
Andz here my body out of foul prysoun  
Me mette that I comed byp andz down  
Wyth ynne our yerde wher I salve a best  
Was like an hounde & wolde haue made a rest  
Up on my body & wolde haue had me deed  
His colour was fetlwyte yelow andz red  
And tipid was his tayle & bothe his erys  
With black vnlike the remenaunt of his kerys  
His snowe smal with gholynge eyen tlypys  
Yet for his luke almost for feet I crye  
This causith me my growynge doutles  
Abov quod she fy for shame fertles  
Allas quod she for by god aboue

## The Tale of The Nonnyes preest

Nolb haue ye lost myn herte & al my loue  
I can not loue a colbard by my feyth  
For certes what so ony Womman sayth  
We al desiren yf it myght be  
To haue husbondis hardy wyse and fre  
And secret and non nygardy ne no fool  
Ne hym that is agast of euery twol  
Ne none auaintour by that god above  
How durst ye say for shame vnto your loue  
That ony thyng myght make you a ferde  
Haue ye no mannys herte & haue a berde  
Alas and conne ye be a ferd of sweneys  
No thyng but fanyte godd boot in sweneys is  
Sweneys ben engendryd of repleyons  
And of fume and of complexions  
Wen humours ben to habundaunt in a wight  
Certis thys dreme whiche ye haue met to nyght  
I telle you trouth ye may trust me  
Cometh of superfluyte & red coler parde  
Whiche cause folke to drede in her dremps  
Of atolbes and of fyre wyth red lemps  
Of red festes that wol hem byte  
Of contek and of waspes grette and lyte  
Ryght as the humour of Melancolye  
Causeth many a man in slepe to crye  
For fear of grette bolis and feris blake  
Or elles blake deuyles wol hem take  
Of other humours coude I telle also  
That werken a man in slepe mykyl wo  
Bu' I wyll passe as lyghtly as I can  
To a town whiche that was so wyse a man  
Sayde he not thus / do no force of dremps  
Nolb spe quod she whan we fle fro the lemps  
For goddys loue as takyth som layatys  
Op peryl of my soule and of my lyf  
I counceyl you the best / I wyll not lye  
That bothe of coler and of malencolye  
Ye purge you and for ye shul not tary

## The Tale Of the Nonnyes preest

Though in this town be non apothecary  
I shal my self tibo herbys trefe polb  
That shal be for your helle and for your prolb  
And in our yerde tho herbys shal I fynde  
The which haue of her proprete by kynde  
To purge you kethethe and eke aboue  
Forget not this for goddis olben loue  
Ye be ryght colerpk of complexyon  
Where the sonne is in his ascencion  
He fynde you not replete of humours hote  
For yf ye doo I dar wel ley a grote  
Than ye shal haue a feyre tereane  
Or ellys an age W that may be your hane  
A day or tibo ye shal haue digestyng  
Of wormys or ye take your sayatyng  
Of laureal centory and of fumetere  
Or ellys of the elderberyes that growyn there  
Of Catapuce or of gaytres beres  
Of herke yue growyn in our yerde that mery is  
Pluck hem vp as they growe and ete hem yn  
We mery husbond for your fader kyn  
Dredyth no dreame I can say you nomore  
Madame quod he gramerry of your hore  
But netheles as touchyng dan catoun  
That of wysedom hath such a grette renoun  
Though he had no dremps for to drede  
By god men may in olde bokys rede  
Of many a man more of auctoryte  
Than euer catoun was so moot y the  
That al the reuers sayth of his sentence  
And haue wel founde by experyence  
That dremps be signyfycacions  
As wel of ioye as of trybulacions  
That folke enduren in this lyf present  
There nedyth to make of this none argument  
The very pitef shewyth it in dede  
One of the grettest auctor that men rede  
Saieth thus that somtyme tibo felowes went

## The Tale of the Nonnes preest

On pylgrymage in ful good entent  
And happid so they comyn in a town  
Where as there was such congregacion  
Of peple and eke of strait herbygge  
That they ne fond as myght as a cotage  
In which they bothe myght lodgyd be  
Wherefore they must of newe site  
As for that nyght departe compaigne  
And eke of them goth to his hysterye  
And took his lodgyng as it wold falle  
That one of hem was lodgyd in a stalle  
Ferre in the yerde byth open of the plow  
That othyr man was lodgyd wel I noll  
As was his aventure or his fortune  
That he gouernyth al as in comune  
And so it befel longe or it were day  
This man mett in his bed there as he lay  
Holl that his felow gan vpon hym calle  
And sayde alas for in an oyes stalle  
Thys nyght shal I be murdred there I fe  
Noll helpe me dere brother or I dy  
In al haste come to me he sayde  
This man out of his slepe for feer abreyde  
And when he was wakyd of his slepe  
He turned hym and toke of thys no kepe  
Hym thought his dreame was but a ranyte  
Thus tlypse in his slepe dremyd he  
And atte thrydde tyme yet his felow  
Cam as hym thought & sayde I am noll scalbe  
Behold my bloody woundys depe & lye  
Aryse vp erly in the morow tye  
And atte west gate of the town quod he  
A cart ful of dung there shalt thou see  
In which my body is hyd ful pruely  
Do that cart arreste holdely  
My gold causyd my deth soth to sayn  
And tolde hym euery poynt how he was slayn  
With a ful pytous face pale of helbe

## The Tale Of the Nonnyes preest

And trust wel his dreme he fond right trewe  
For on the morowe as sone as it was day  
To his felowys June he took the way  
And when that he cam to the oysse stalle  
After his felow he began to calle  
The osteler answerde hym anon  
And sayde syr your felow is goon  
As sone as day he went out of the town  
This man gan fallyn in suspesson  
Remembryng of his drems that he mette  
And forth he goth no longer wolde he lette  
Unto the westgate of the town and fonde  
A donge cartte as it were to donge londe  
That was arayed in the same wyse  
As ye haue herde the dede man deuyse  
And with hardy herte he gan to crye  
Vnmaunce and iustyce of thys felonye  
My felow murtherd is this same nyght  
And in thys cartte he lyeth gapynge vp ryght  
I crye out on the mynysters quod he  
That shold kepe and reule thys cite  
Howe alas here lyeth my felow slayn  
What shold I more of thys tale sayn  
The peple out stert & cast the cartte to grounde  
And in the myddel of the dong they founde  
The dede man that murtherd was al welbe  
O blessful god that art so good and trewe  
So hold that thou belbreyst murther alwey  
Murther wyll out that se we day by day  
Murther is so walfom and abhomyneable  
To god that so iust is and reson ble  
That he ne wol it suffre helpe to be  
Though it abyde a yere or tibo or thre  
Murther wyll out this is my conclusion  
And right anon the mynysters of the town  
Haue hent the carter and so sore hym pyned  
And eke the hosteler so sore engyned  
That they belnebe her wyckednesse anon

## The Tale of the Nonnyes preest

And weren an hangyd by the necke soon  
Here may ye see that dremps ben to drede  
And art is in the same lyp I rede  
Ryght in the nexte chappitre after thys  
I gab not so haue I joye and llys

**T**wo men that wold haue passid ouer the se  
For certeyn causes in to a fer contre  
Yf the wynde ne had be contrarie  
That made hem in a cyte to tarye  
That stood ful mery by on an hauch syde  
But on a day ayenst an euyn tyde  
The wynde gan chaunge & blew as hem lest  
Joly and glad they wentyn to rest  
And cast hem ful erly for to saylle  
But forkyth to one mā fil a grette merueille  
The one of hem in slepyng as he lay  
He mette a wonder dreme agayn the day  
Hym thought a man stode by his beddis syde  
And hym commaundyng that he sholde abyde  
And sayd hym thus yf thou to morow wende  
Thou shalt be dreynt my tale is at an ende  
He wook & tolde his felow what he mette  
And prayd hym his viage for to lette  
As for that day he prayd hym for to abyde  
His felow that lay by his beddis syde  
Can for to calbe & scornyd hym ful faste  
No dreme quod he may so my herte agast  
That I wol lette for to do my thyngis  
I set nat a scilbe for thy drempnges  
For sbeuenes be but fanytres and japes  
Men metyn alday of ollys and of apes  
And eke of many a mase therlwyth al  
And drempyn of thyng that neuer was ne shal  
But sith I see that thou wolt hert abyde  
And thus skouthen wylfully thy tyde  
God woot it rebith me & haue goody day  
And thus he toke his leue & went his way

## The Tale Of the Nonnyes preest

But er he hadde half his cours y sayedy  
I not why ne what myschaunce it ayledy  
But casuelly the shippes botom to rent  
And shyp & man vnder the water went  
In sight of othyr shippis lesyde  
That wyth hym sayedy atte same tyde  
And therfore saye percelot so dere  
By such ensamples olde mayst thou here  
That no man holde be to reckless  
Of drems for I say the doutles  
That many a dreme ful sore is for to drede  
So in the lyf of seynt Kenelme I rede  
That was kenulphus sone the nobyl kyng  
Of mercurik hold kenelme mette a thyng  
A litil or he were murdryd on a day  
His murdr in his vpsion he say  
His notis hym expounded it euery del  
His sibouryn & had hym kepe hym wel  
If so treson but he was but thynne olde  
And therfor lityl tale he hath therof tolde  
Of ony dreme so holy was his herte  
By god I had leuer than my sherte  
That ye had herde his legend as haue I  
Dame percelot I say to yow trulpy  
Macrobyus that writeth the a visoun  
In affryke of the worthy scyppoun  
Affermyth drems & sayth that they been  
Warnyng of thynges that we after seen  
And ferthermore I praye yow lokyng wel  
In the olde testament of daniel  
Yf he helde drems ony knyght  
Rede eke of Joseph and there shul ye se  
Wondrys ken som tyme but I say not al  
Warnyng of thynges that shul after fal  
So of egypt the kyng that hight pharaos  
His baker and his boteler also  
Wherthir they felt none effect in drems  
Wher so wol seke actis of sondry temps

## The Tale of the Nonnyes preest

May rede of drempes a wonder thyng  
Lo Cresus whiche was of hie kyng  
Mette he not that he sat vpon a tree  
Whiche signyfied he shold hangyd he  
Lo Andrometa Hectors wyf  
That day that Hector shold lese his lyf  
She dremyd in the same nyght befor  
Holt that the lyf of Hector shold he for  
Yf that day he went vñ to bataylle  
She warnyd hym but it myght not auayle  
He went for to fyght netheles  
But he was slayn anon of achylles  
But that tale is to longe to telle  
And eke it is nygh day I may not dwelle  
Shortly I say as for conclusion  
That I shalle haue of this aucion  
Aduersite and I say furthermore  
That I ne telle of laxatiues no store  
For they be vñemous I boote it weel  
I hem deffre I loue hem neuer a deul  
But now let vs speke of myrthe & seynt al this  
Madame Pertakot so haue I blys  
Of o thyng god hath me sent large grace  
For when I see the beaute of your face  
Ye be so skarlet reed about your eyen  
It maketh al my drede for to dyen  
For also sike as in principio  
Mulier est hominis confusio  
Madame the sentence of this latyn is  
Womman is mannys joye and his blys  
For when I se on nyght your seft syde  
Al be it that I may not on yold ryde  
For that our prece is made so natowd alas  
I am so ful of joye and of solas  
That y diffre bothe sbeuene and dreme  
And with that word he flepe down fro the beme  
For it was day and eke his hennys alle  
And wyth a chull he gan hym for to calle

## The Tale Of the Nonnyes preest

For he had found a corn lay in the yerde  
Ryal he was & nomore a ferde  
He federyd pertelot elbenty tyme  
And trede her eke as ofte or it was pryne  
He lokyth as he were a grym houn  
And on his toos he comed by and down  
Hym deyned not to sette his feet to grounde  
And chuckyd whan he had a corn y founde  
And to hym than ran his wyuys alle  
As ryal as a prynce in his halle  
Leue I thys chauntecleer in his pasture  
And after wol I telle of his auenture  
Whan the moneth in the which the world began  
That hight marche that god first made man  
Was complet and passyd were also  
Sich marche began elbenty dayes and elbo  
Wesyl that chauntecleer in al his pryde  
Hys seyn wyuys walkyng hym kespde  
Cast by his eyen to the bright sonne  
That in the signe of taurus was y tonne  
Fourty degrees and one & somwhat more  
He knelbe by kynde & by non other lore  
That it was pryne & crewb with a blissful steue  
The sonne he sayde is clomke by to kryn  
Fourty degrees & one & somwhat more I wys  
Madame pertelot my worldis wyf  
Herkyen hold this blissful briddis synge  
And see the fressh flouris hold they sprynge  
Ful is myn herte of reuel and solas  
But sodenly hym fyl a sorowful caas  
For euer the latter ende of ioye is woo  
God wote that worldy ioye is sone a goo  
And yf a wethour coude fayr endyte  
He in a cronycle myght sauely wyte  
As for a souerayn notabylyte  
Hold euery wyseman herkyen to me  
This story is also trewe I undertake  
As is the booke of launcelot delake

## The Tale of the Nonnes preste

That women holden in ful grete reuerence  
Now wol I turne agen to my sentence  
A col fox ful of slepyght and iniquyte  
That in the groue hady woned? yere's thre  
O he hygh ymagynacion aforwast  
The same nyght thorough the hedge brast  
In to the yerde there chauntecleer the fayre  
Was wont to kepe his wyf to repaire  
And in a bed of wortes styll he lay  
Till it was passyd? vnderyn of the day  
Waytyngh his tyme on chauntecleer to falle  
As gladly doon thys homyces alle  
That in a wyfte ligge to murder men  
A fals murderour ruckyngh in thy den  
O nelbe Scariot and? nelbe Genshon  
Fals dissimulour o grek synon  
That broughtist troye vnder to sorow  
O chauntecleer acursid? be the morow  
That thou in thy yerde flep fro the kempes  
Thou were ful wel warnyd by thy drempes  
That ylle day was perikous to the  
But what that god? afore wote muste nedis be  
Aftir the oppynyon of certeyn clerkys  
Witnes of hym that ony clerk is  
That in soke is grete alteration  
In this matir a grete disputacion  
And? hath ben of an hondred thousand men  
But I ne can not bulke it to the brene  
As can the holy doctour auseryn  
Or boec or the bysshop Eadwardyn  
Whethyr that goddis worthy fore wetyngh  
Streyneth me nedely to doo a thyng?  
Nedely clepe I symple necessity  
Or yf the fre choyse be grauntid? me  
To doo that same thyng or do it nought  
Though god? forboot it or it was brought  
Or yf his wytyng streyneth neythr adwel  
But by necessity condycional

## The Tale Of the Nonnyes preest

I wol not haue to doon of such matere  
My tale is of a cok as ye shal here  
That toke his counceyl of his wyf both forow  
To walke in the yerde vpon the morow  
That he had met the dreame as I yow tolde  
Wymens counceyllis ben ful ofte colde  
Wymens counceyl broughte vs first to woo  
And made Adam fro paradys to go  
There as he was ful mery and wel at ese  
But for I not whom I myght displese  
Yf I counceyl of wymmen wold blame  
Passe ouer for I sayd it in my game  
Redith auctours where they trete of such matere  
And what they say of wymmen ye molbe here  
These ben the cokys wordis & not myn  
I can no harme of no womyn deigne  
Fayr in the sonde to lute her merily  
With pertelot & al her susteris by  
Aynst the sonne & chauntecleer so free  
Sang merier than the mer mayde in the see  
For rhyfologus sayth vtylerly  
Holv that they synge wel & meryly  
And so lyf as he cast his eye  
Among the Wortis on a butterfly  
He was waar of this foye that lay ful colde  
No thyng than luse hym for to colde  
But cryde anon cok cok and up he stert  
As man that was afraid in his bert  
For naturelly a best desireth to fle  
Fro his contrary yf he may it see  
Though he neuer had seen it erst by his eye  
This chauntecleer whan he gan hym aspre  
He wold haue fled but that the foy anon  
Sayd gentil sir alas what wyl ye don  
We ye afraid of me that am your frende  
Now certis I were worse than a fende  
If I to you wold harme or vylonye  
I am not comen your counceyl to aspre

## The Tale of The Nonnys preest

But treibly the cause of my comynge  
Was only to here holbe syng  
For treibly ye haue as mery a steupn  
As ony aungel hath that is in heuyn  
Therbyth ye haue of musik more felynge  
Than had boce or ony that can syng  
My lord your fadir god his soule blys  
And eke your moder of her gentilnes  
Haue in my holdes be to my grette ese  
And certis sit ful fayne wolde I pou plese  
But for man sake of syngynge I wolde sey  
So moot I becomen wel myn eyen tibe  
Saue you ne herde I neuer man so synge  
As dyd your fadir in the mornynge  
Certis it was of herbe al that he song  
And for to make his boys the more streng  
He wolde so prync hym that byth bothe his eyen  
He must wynde so loude he must cryen  
And stondyn on his tip toes ther byth a be  
Any stretch forth his necke long and smalle  
And eke he was of such discrecyon  
That there was no man in no regyon  
That hym in song or wysdom myght passe  
I haue wel redy dan barnel the asse  
Among his wrold that there was a celt  
For that a prestes sone gaf hym a knok  
Op on his legges while he was yong and nyte  
He made hym for to lese his benesyte  
But certyn there is no comparison  
Betwyx the wysdom and discrecion  
Of your fadir & of his subtilite  
Now syngeith sit for saynt charite  
Lette see can ye your fadir counterfete  
This chauntecleer his wynges gan to bete  
As man that coude not his wyl aspre  
So was he cause shyd with his flattery  
Alas ye lordis many a false flatterour  
Is in your court & many a false besyngour

## The Tale Of the Nonny's preest

That please you wel more by my feyth  
Than he that sothfastens vnto you sayth  
Redyth ecclesiast of flattery  
We haare ye lordis of her trecherye  
This chauntecleer stood hye vpon his toos  
Stretchyng hys necke and helde his eyen choos  
And gan to crolbe wolde for the nonys  
And dan ruffel the fow start vp at onys  
And by the gorget hent chauntecleer  
And on his bak towarde the wode hym beer  
For yet was there no man that hym sued  
O destene that mayst not be eschued  
Alas that chauntecleer flelde fro the lempo  
Alas his Wyf naught not of drempo  
And on a friday fyl al this myschaunce  
O Venus that art goddesse of plesaunce  
Sithnes that thy seruaut was this chauntecleer  
And in thy scruple dyd al his polber  
More for delpte than the world to mulcplye  
Wys woldest thou suffre hym on thy day to dye  
O Gaufride dere mayster souereyn  
That when the worthy kyng richard was sleyn  
Wyth shot compleynedyst his deth so sore  
Why ne had I noll thy science & thy lore  
The friday for to chyden as dyd ye  
For on a friday shortly slayn was he  
Than wold I shelde yow holl that I coude pleyne  
For chauntecleer drede and for his peyn  
Certis such crye ne lamentacion  
Was neuer of ladies made when that Jhon  
Was wone. & piteus with his bryght slyberd  
When he hent kyng Pryam by the berde  
And slou hym as sayth eneydos  
As maden al the kennyng in the choos  
When that they had of chauntecleer the sight  
But souerely dame pertelot straight  
Ful wolde than dyd hasdrubak's wyf  
When that her husbond had lost his lyf

## The Tale of The Nonnys preest

And that the romayns had brent Cartage  
She was so ful of turment and of rage  
That wylfully in to the fyre she stert  
And brend her self with a stedfast hert  
O woful kennyng ryght so cryden ye  
As when that new brent the cyte  
Of rome cryden the senatours wyues  
For that her husbondys shold lese her luyves  
Wthouten gyft new hath hem sleyn  
Now wyl I turne to my tale agayn  
This sely wydolb and hir doughter twa  
Herden the kennyng cryen and make woo  
And out at the dore stert they anoon  
And salb the foy towarde the wode goon  
And lare vpon his back the cok albey  
And cryden out a harolb and welalbey  
A ha the foy and after hym they ran  
And eke with stauys many an othyr man  
Ran colle our dogge talbot and garbanc  
And malkyn with her dystaf in her hond  
Ran colb a calf and eke the very hogges  
For they so sore a ferde were of the dogges  
And sholtyng of men a of women eke  
They ranne so her herte thought to breke  
They sellen as fendys don in selle  
The dokys cryden as men wold hem quele  
The gees for feet flelbe ouer the trees  
Out of the hyues cam the swarme of bees  
So hidous was the noyse a benediate  
Certis Jacke stralbe ne his meyne  
He made neuyr sholbtes half so shrille  
When that they wolde ony flemynge kille  
As that day was made vp on the foy  
Of bras they blew the trompes a of foy  
Of horn a boon in whiche they blew a polbpyd  
And therewith they shrikyd and shoutyd  
It semed as though leuyn shold falle  
Now good men I pray polb harkyn alle

## The Tale Of the Monnyes preest

To hold fortune turnyth sodenly  
The hope and the pryde of her enemye  
This cok that laye vpon thy foyes bak  
In al his drede vnto the foy he spak  
And sayde sir yf I were as ye  
Yet shold I say as wyse god helpe me  
Turnyth ayeen ye proude churles alle  
A very pestelence vpon you falle  
Now am I come vnto this bodis syde  
Maugre your hede the cok shal here abyde  
I wyll hym ete in feyth and that anon  
The foy answerde in feyth it shal be don  
And as he spak the worde al sodenly  
This cok brake from his mouth despyerly  
And hygh vpon a tree he flelbe anon  
And when the foy saw that he was goon  
Alas quod he o chuntecleer alas  
I haue quod he do to you grete trespass  
In as much as I made you aserde  
When I you hente and brought out of your yerde  
But sir I dyd hit not in no wickyd entent  
Come down & I shal telle you what I ment  
I shal you say soth so god helpe me so  
May than quod he I shalbe vs both tibo  
And first I shalbe my self both blood & bones  
Yf thou begyle me oter than onys  
Thou shalt nomore wyth thy flatterye  
Do me syng wyth a wynteryng eye  
For he that wyntereth when he shold see  
Al wyllfully god lete hym neuer thee  
May quod the foy but god reue hym myschaunce  
That is so indiscrete of gouernaunce  
That iangelith when that he shold haue pes  
To such it is for to be reckles  
And necligent and truste on flatterye  
But ye that holden this tale a folye  
As of a foy and a cok and an hen  
Takyth the moralte good men

## The Prologue

For saynt poul sayth al that writyn is  
To our doctryne it is writen y this  
Takyth the fruyt and leet the chaf be styll  
Now good? god yf that it be thy wyll  
As seith my lord so make vs al good men  
And tryng vs to thy hygh blisse amen

Here begynneth the mauncyples prologue

**O**ur nonnyes preest our host sayd anon  
Y blessed be thy breche and euery stoon  
This was a mery tale of chaunteclere  
But by my trouth yf thou were secular  
Thou woldest ben a tredefoul a right  
For yf thou haue corage/ as thou hast myght  
The were nede of kennys as I bene  
Ye more than seven tymes seuentene  
See which bralynes hath this gentil preest  
So grete a necke and such a large breest  
He lokyth as a sporhaue wyth his eyen  
Hym nedeth not his colours for to dyen  
Wyth brasyl ne wyth grayn of portyngale  
But sit fayne falle you for your tale  
And after that he wyth ful mery chere  
Sayd to an other man/as ye shal here  
Woot ye not where there stondyth a litil town  
Whiche that is clepyd? bob byp and? down  
Under the blee in caunterbury way  
There gan our host to iape and? to pley  
And sayd? sires what dun is in the myre  
Is there no man for preyer ne for hyre  
That wol alwake our felaw schynde  
A theef myght hym ful lightly wolle & bynde  
Se how he nappith see for colkis sonys  
How he wol falle from his hors attynys  
Is that a cook of london wyth myschaunce  
Do hym comfort he knoldyth his penaunce

## The Prologue

For he shal telle a tale by my fey  
Al though it be not worth a to tel fey  
Alwake thou cook qd? he god geue the sorow  
What eyles the to slepe by the morow  
Hast thou had fleyn al nyght or art thou drunk  
Or hast thou al nyght with som quene y swonk  
So that thou mayst not holde by thy fey  
This cook that was ful pale & no thyng red  
Sayd? our host so god? my soule blesse  
There is falle on me grete heuynesse  
Not I nat why me were leuer to slepe  
Then the best gason of wyne in chepe  
Wel quod the maunaypl yf it may do e?e  
To the sir cook & to no wyght displese  
Which that hit ryden in this companye  
And that our host wyl of his curtesye  
I wyl as nold excuse the of thy tale  
For in good? feyth thy visage is ful pale  
Thyn eyen as solben sothly as me thynketh  
And wel I woot thy breth ful soure synneth  
That shewyth wel thou art not wel disposyd?  
Of me certeyn thou shalt not be glowsyd?  
Se how he galpeth so this dronken wyght  
As though he wold? be swolbe anon right  
Hold? close thy mouth by thy fader kyn  
The deuyll of helte sette his foot ther in  
Thy cursyd? breth wyl infecte us alle  
If synnyng syn / fy foule moot the be falle  
Takyn? hede fyre of this lusty man  
Nold swete syr wyl ye iuste atte lan  
Tertio me thynketh ye be wel shap  
I trow that ye haue dronken wyne ap  
And? that is when men pleyen at a seral  
And with his speche the cook bewydyd al bral  
And on the maunaypl he gan to nodde faste  
For lacke of speche adoun the hors hym caste  
Whe as he lay til that men hym by took  
This was a fey chauce of a cook

## The Prologue

Alas that he ne had holde hym by his ladye  
And er that he ayeu were in his ladye  
There was a greet shouping both to and fro  
To lift hym vp and mykyll care and woo  
So vnbeldy was thys sely palkyd goost  
And to the mauncypl than spack our hoost  
By cause that drynke hath domynacion  
Ov on thys man by my sauacion  
I trowe leldy wyl he telle his tale  
For were it wyne or olde mowsey ale  
That he hath dronkyn he speketh so in his nose  
And fnesyth fast and eke he hath the pose  
He hath also to doo more than ynough  
To kepe hym on his capyl out of the slough  
And yf he fall: from his capyl eft sone  
Than shul we al haue ynough to done  
In lystyng by his dronkyn corps  
Tel on thy tale of hym make I no fors  
But yet mauncypl in feyth thou art to nyc  
Thus openly to reprove hym of his wyce  
Another day he wyl perauenture  
Recleyne the and bryng the to lure  
I mene he speke wyl of smale thynges  
And for to pyncke at thy rekenynges  
That were not honest yf it cam to the preef  
No ad: the mauncypl that were a greet myschief  
So myght he bryng me in to the snare  
Yet had I leuer paye for the mare  
Which he rideth on than he shold wyth me serue  
I wol not brath hym so mote I thryue  
That I spack I sayd it but in soude  
And wote ye what I haue here in my gourde  
A draught of wyne ye of a rype grape  
And right anon ye shul see a good: jape  
This cook shal drynke therof yf I may  
Ov payne of my lyf he wyl not say nay  
And certenly to tellyn as it was  
Of this vessel the cook dranke fast alas

## The Prologue

What nedpeth it he drank ynough befor  
And when he had pouppd in his horn  
To the mauncypl he took the gourde agayn  
And of the drynke the cook was ful fayn  
And thankyd hym in suche wyse as he coude  
Than gan our host to calyghe wonder boude  
And sayde I se wel it is necessary  
Where that we gon good drynke with vs to carpe  
For that wol turne rancour and dysese  
To accorde & loue and many a word to pese  
O lucas y blyssyd be thy holy name  
That so canst turne ernest in to game  
Worshyp and thanke be to thy deyte  
Of that mater ye gete nomore of me  
Tel on thy tale thou mauncypl I the praye  
Wel syr quod he herkenth What I seye

Here endyth the mauncypls prologue

# The Tale of the Mauncipyl

And begynneth his tale



**W**hen pithus dwellyd in the adoun  
As olde folkis maken menaoun  
He was the most lufey luteeler  
Of al the world and eke the best archer  
He slough pithon the serpent as he lay  
Sleppynge ayenst the sonne vpon a day  
And many anothyr nobyl worthy dede  
He with his folwe brought as men molbe rede  
Pleure he coude on euery mynstrelere  
And synge that it was a meddye  
To here of his cleer voys the soun  
Certes the kynge of Eskes amphyon  
That with his song wallyd the cite  
Coude neuer synge half so wel as he  
For he was the semelyste man  
That is or was sith the world began

## The Tale of the Mauncypyl

What nedyth it his feture to discreue  
For in thys world? was there non so fayr alpye  
He was therewith fulfilled of gentylnesse  
Of honour and of parfycht worthynesse  
This pkybus that was flour of lacykerye  
As wel in freedom as in chyualrye  
For his disport in signe eke of vycorye  
Of pkyton so as trelyth ys the story  
Was wont to bere in his hond a colbe  
Nolb had this pkybus in his hous a colbe  
With ynn a cage y fosteryd many a day  
And taught it speke as men trex a jay  
Wpyt was this colbe as is a snolb whyt swan  
And countrefetid the speche of euery man  
He coude when he shold telle a tale  
There was in al this world non nyghtyngale  
Ne coude be an hondred thousand deel  
Spynge so wonderly merly and weel  
Nolb had this pkybus in his hous a wyf  
Whiche that he loued more than his lyf  
And nyght & day did euery his dyligence  
Her for to plesse and do her reuerence  
Saue only yf the soth yf I shal sayn  
Jehus he was & wolde haue kept her fayn  
For hym were so h iappyd for to be  
And so is euery wyght in such degre  
But al for nought for it auaylid nought  
A good wyf that is clene of werk and thought  
Shold not be kept in non alwayte caryn  
And trely the labour is in keyn  
To kepe a shrelbe for it wyll not be  
This holde I for a very nyete  
To spylle labour for to kepe wyuyes  
Thus wryten olde clerkys in her luyes  
But nolb to purpos as I first began  
This worthy pkybus doth al that he can  
To plesse her Wenynge thorelb such plesaunce  
And for his manhod & for his gouernaunce

## The Tale of the Mauncypyl

That noman shold put hym from his grace  
But god it boost there may no man embrace  
As to discrepne a thyng which that nature  
Hath naturelly set in a creature  
Take ony lryd and put hym in a cage  
And do al thyng entent and thy courage  
To foster it tenderly wyth mete and drynke  
Of al deyntes that thou canst lerynke  
And kepe it also clenly as thou may  
Al though his cage of golde be neuer so gay  
Yet hath this bryd by tveny thousand fold  
Feuer in a forest that is wyld and cold  
Go ete wormys and such wretchydnes  
For euer this bryd wyll do his lesnes  
To ascape out of his cage when he may  
His lyberte the bryd despyth ap  
Let take a cat and foster hyr wyth mylk  
And tender flessh & make her couche of sylk  
And let hir see a mouse go by the wal  
Anon she weryyth flessh & couche and al  
And euery deynte that is in that hous  
Such appetyt hath she to ete the mouse  
So here hath lust his domynacion  
And appetyt flemyth discretion  
A she wolf hath also a vylen kynde  
The selbyse wolf that she may fynde  
Or lest of reputacion that wyll she take  
In tyme when her lust to haue a make  
Al these ensaumpls speke I by these men  
That ben butre be & nothyng by women  
For men haue euer a rowous appetyt  
On alder thyng to perfourme her desyt  
Than on her wyuys be they neuer so feyr  
Ne neuer so trewe ne so delycye  
Flessh is so nelbhangyl wyth myschaunce  
That we ne konne in no thyng haue plesaunce  
That soluyth vnto vertu ony wyse  
Thus plebus which thought no gyle

## The Tale of the Mauncypyl

Discreued? was for al his iolyte  
For vnder hym another had? the  
A man of litil reputacion  
Not worth to plebus in comparison  
The more harme is it happith oft so  
Of whiche there comyth much harm and? woo  
And so ketyl wixen plebus was absent  
His wyf anon hath for her lemman sent  
Her lemman certis that is a knauysch speche  
Forgeue it me and that I you beseeche  
The wyse plato sayth as ye mow rede  
The worde must nedde acorde wyth the dede  
If men shul telle properly a thyng?  
The worde must cosyn be to the workyng?  
I am a boystous man ryght thus say I  
There is but litil difference twelwylly  
Betwix a wyf that is of hygh degre  
If of her body dyshonest she be  
And? a pore wenche other than thys  
If it so be they werke both amys  
But that the gentil is in staat aboue  
She shal be clepyd? his lady and his loue  
And for that other is a powder woman  
She shal be clepyd? hys wenche or his lemman  
And god it woote myn olben dere brother  
Men leue as wolbe that one as that othyr  
Right so ketyl a titleles tyraunt  
And an out lalbe or a theef erraunt  
The same I say there is no dyfference  
To Alisaunder was tolde thys sentence  
That for the tyraunt is of gretter myght  
By force of meyne to sice down right  
And brenne hous & hoome & make al pleyne  
So therfore is he clepyd? a capteyn  
And for the outlalbe hath but smal meyne  
And may not doo so grette an harme as he  
He bryng a contrie to so grette myschief  
Men clepe hym an outlalbe or a theef

## The Tale of the Maunappt

But for I am a man not textuel  
I wol not telle of textes neuer a deel  
I wyl goo to my tale as I began  
Whan plebus wyf had sent for her lemman  
Anon they broughen al there luste volage  
This white crolbe that hng ay in the cage  
Beseld her werk & sayde neuer a worde  
And when spom was come plebus the lord  
This crolbe song cuckolb cuckolb cuckow  
What brid qd? plebus wnt spngest thow  
Ne were thou not wont so mealy to spnge  
That to my herte it was a reioysng  
To here this boys alas what songe is this  
Wy god? quod he I spnge not amys  
Plebus quod he for al thy worthynes  
For al thy beaute and thy gentylnes  
For al thy song and al thy mynstralcye  
For al thy maytngz blynd is thy eye  
With one of sityl reputacon  
Not worth to the in comparyson  
The mountaunce of a gnat so moot I thynke  
For on thy bed thy wyf I salbe hym slyue  
What wol ye more? he crolbe anon hym tolde  
Wy lady tokenys and by wordis tolde  
Holv that his wyf had don her lecherie  
Hym to grete shame and to grete bysonne  
And tolde hym eft he salbe it wyth his eyen  
This plebus gan al heylbard? for to prync  
Hym thought his woful herte brast a tyde  
His colbe he lent & set ther ynn a fow  
And in his yre he hath his wyf slayn  
This is the effect there is nomore to sayn  
For sorowbe wherof he brak his mynstralcie  
Bothe harpe and lute/ geterne and saltrye  
And eke he brak his crollys and his colbe  
And after that thus spak he to the crolbe  
Traytour quod he wyth tongue of scorpion  
Thou hast me brought to my confusion

## The Tale of the Mauncippyl

Alas that I was brought whynere I deed  
O dere wyf O gemme o lustyked  
That were to me so sad & eke so trewe  
Now liest thou ded with face pale of helwe  
Ful gyttles that durst I swere y wyf  
O rakyll hond to do so foule a mys  
O troubyl wyf O trewe rekles  
That bnaupsed synnest gyttles  
O wantrust ful of fals suspicion  
Where was thy wyf and thy discrecion  
O eury man felbaar of rekylnes  
He trolbe us thyng without strong wytnes  
Smyte not to sone or thou wyf whynere  
And be awysid wel and sickerly  
Or ye do ony execution  
Wy on your pr for suspicion  
Alas a thousand folk haue rekyl tre  
Fully fordoon & brought hem in the myre  
Alas for sorow I wyf my self sice  
And to the crolbe o fals thef sayde he  
I wol auyte anon thy fals tale  
Thou song whilom like an nyghtyngale  
Now shalt thou fals theef thy song forgoon  
Eke thy whytte fetheris euerichone  
He neuer in al thy lyf shalt thou speke  
Thus shul men on a trepture be a wreke  
Thou & thyng offsprynge euer shal be blake  
He neuer swete noyse shul ye make  
But euer crye ayenst tempest and rayn  
In tokyng that thorow the my wyf is slayn  
And to the crolbe he stert & that anon  
And pullyd of his whyt fetheris euerichon  
And made hym blak & wett hym al his songe  
And eke his speche & out atte dore hym songe  
Onto the deupl whiche I hym betake  
And for this cause be al crolbys blake  
Lordinges by this ensaumppyl I wyf you pray  
Welbar and take kepe what I say

## The Tale of the Maunapyl

Ne tellyth neuer noman in your lyf  
Holt that another man hath dyght his wyf  
He wyf pou hath mortally wteyn  
Dan salamon as wyse clerkys seyn  
Techyth a man to kepe his tongue wel  
(But as I sayd) I am not tyeuel  
(But netheles thus taught me my dame  
My sonne thynke on the crolle a goddis name  
My sene kepe wel thy tongue & kepe thy frend?  
A wickyd tongue is worse than a fend?  
My sone from a fend men may hem blyffe  
My sone god of his endles goodnesse  
Walkyd a tongue wyth teth & lipys eke  
For man shold hym awyse what he speke  
My sone ful oft for to mykyl speke  
Hath many a man be spylt as clerkys teche  
But for lityl speke spoken awysedly  
Is no man shent to speke generally  
My sone thy tongue sholdest thou reserue  
At al tyme but whan thou doost thy prayere  
To speke of god in heuour and prayere  
The first vertu sone yf thou wyllt leue  
Is to reserue & kepe wel thy tunge  
Thus lerne chyldren whan they be yonge  
My sone of mykyl spekynge yn awysed  
There lasse spekynge had I nough suffysyd  
Comyth mykyl harme thus was me taught  
In mykyl speke synne wantyth naught  
Wost thou wherfor a rakyl tunge scrupth  
Right as a siber for cuttith & forkerupth  
An arme a tilbo my dere sone right so  
A tunge cuttith frendshyp al a tilbo  
A jangler is to god obhomynabyl  
Rede salamon so wyse & honourabyl  
Rede dauid & his psalms rede seneke  
My sone speke not ne wyth thy frend thou like  
Dismyl as thou were deaf yf that thou here  
The jangelour speketh of perous matere

## The Prologue

The flemyng sayth lerne yf that thou leste  
That til Jangelynge causith muche reſte  
My ſone yf thou no wickeu word haſt ſayd  
The dar not drede for to be ſelbrayd  
But he that hath myſſayde I dar wel ſayn  
He may by no way clepe his worde agayn  
Thynge that is ſayd / is ſayd & forth it goth  
Though hym repente or hym be neuer ſo ſoth  
He is thral to hym to whom he hath ſayd  
A tale for which he is nold euyl apayd  
My ſone ſelbaar and he non auctor nelbe  
Of tidyngeſ whether they be fale or trewe  
Where ſo thou come among hye or lowe  
Kepe wel thy tounge and thynk on the crowe

Here endeth the maunapis tale

Here begynneth the parſonnys prologue

**T**hat the maunapil had his tale ended  
The ſonne fro the ſouth ſyde is deſcended  
So lowe that it was not to my ſight  
Degrees of fyue and twenty of hight  
Ten at the clocke it was ſo as I geſſe  
For enleyn foot a lital more or leſſe  
My ſhadow was at that tyme as there  
Of ſuche feet as my lengthe partid were  
In vii feet equally of proporcion  
The wyth the monys exaltacion  
I mene abra all day gan aſcende  
As he were entrynge at the thorpys ende  
For which our hoſt as he was wont to ge  
Ap in thys caas this Joly compaigne  
Sayde in thys wyſe lordyngeſ euerychoon  
Glou ſakkyth be no tale more than oon  
Fulfilled is my ſentence and my decre  
Who wyl nold telle a tale let ſce

## The Prologue

Almost fullfild is myn ordenaunce  
I pray to god so yeue hym right good chaunce  
That tellith this tale to vs lustely  
Syr preste quod he art thou a viary  
Or art thou a parson say soth by the fey  
We wyl that thou be breke thou not our pley  
For euery man saue thou hit told his tale  
Unbokyl & shelbe vs what is in thy male  
For treibly me thynketh by thy cite  
Thou sholdest knyght by wel a greet matere  
Tel vs a fabyl anon for cokkes sonys  
This parson hym answerde al attonys  
Thou getist fabyl non told for me  
For woule that writeth to Tymothe  
Repreueth hem that wayuen sothfastnesse  
Andy telen fablis and such wretchydnesse  
Why sholde I solbe draff out of my fise  
Wlken I may solbe wretche yf that me lise  
For whiche I say yf that ye lise to here  
Moralite andy of vertuous matere  
Andy than yf ye wyl yeue me audyence  
I wolde ful faryn at cristys reuerence  
Done you plesaunce leefful as I can  
But trustyth wel I am a sotheryn man  
I can not gesse rum ram rus by letter  
And god wote ryne holde I but lytil better  
Andy therfore yf ye lust I wyl not glose  
I wyl you telle a litil tale in prose  
To knet by al this fese & make an ende  
And ihesu for his grace wylt me sende  
To shelbe you the wey in thys byage  
Of thylike parficht glorious pylgremage  
That hight iherusalem celestyal  
And yf ye wuchsauf anon I shal  
Begynne vpon my tale for whiche I praye  
Tel your aups I can no better seye  
But nethelce this meditacion  
I put it ay vnder correction

## The Prologue

Of clerkys for I am not textuel  
I take but the sentence trusteth wel  
Therefore I make protestaacion  
That I wol stonde to correction  
Wp on this worde we haue assentid sone  
For as it semed it was for to done  
To enden in som vertuous sentence  
And for to geue hym space and audyence  
And had our hoost he sholde to hym seye  
That al we to telle his tale hym prye  
Our hoost had the wordys for vs alle  
Syr preest quod he nold sayr moot you felle  
Sayth what ye like and we shul gladly here  
And wyth that worde he sayde in this manere  
Tellyth quod he your medytacion  
But hastyth you the sonne wyl adoun  
Weth fructuous and that in litil space  
And to do wel god sende you his grace

Here endyth the parsons prologue

## The Tale of the Parson

And here begynneth his tale



Iheremie vii/State super vias et videte & interrogate de viis anti-  
quis/que sit via bona/& ambulat in ea/& inuenietis refrigeriū  
animabus vestris &c

**O**ur swete lord god of heuen that no man wil perisse but  
wil that we comen al to the knowlechyng of hym & to the  
blissful lyf that is pardurable amonesteth vs by the pro-  
phete Iheremye that saith in this wyse/secondeth vpon the weyes / &  
see & aye ye of olde pathes/that is to seye of olde sentenais whiche  
is gooder weye / And walketh in that weye and that is refresch-  
yng for your soules / Many ben the weyes spiritual that leden  
folke to our lord Ihesu Cryste / And to the regne of glorie/  
Of whiche wayes / There is a ful noble weye and wel coue-  
nable whiche may not fayle to man ne to woman that through  
synne hath mysgoon fro the right weye of Iherusalem celestyal /

## The Tale of the Parson

And this weye is cleped penytence / Of which man shold glad  
serken and enquire with al his herte to wete / What is penyten  
or penaunce / And wite whens it is cleppyd penytence / Al  
shold many maners ben the actions of werchyng of penytence  
shold many spyes there be of penytence / And which thynges  
houn and apperteynen to penytence / Saynt ambrose sayth the  
penytence is the pleyng of the man for the gylte that he ha  
do / And nomore to doo any thyng for the which hym ought  
pleyne / And som doctor sayth / that penaunce is the weymen  
tyng of man that soroweth for his synne / And pyneth hym so  
for he hath mysdon / Penytence wyth certeyn circumstaunce  
very repentaunce of man that holdeth hym self in sorowbe and  
ther peyne for his gyltes / And for he shal be very penyte  
He shal first belbaylen the synnes that he hath don / And stedf  
ly purpose in his herte to haue shifte of mouth / And to do  
satisfaction and neuer for to doo thyng for which hym ough  
more to belbayle or compleyne / And to contynue in good werch  
Or ellys his repentaunce may not auayle / For as sayth say  
Poudre / He is a japer and a gabler and not very repentaunce  
that eftsones doth thyng for which hym olbeth to repente  
synte to doo synne / may not auayle / But netheles men sh  
take hope that at every tyme that men falleth he it neuer so  
that he may aryse thurgh penytence yf he haue grace / But c  
teynly it is greet doute / For as sayth saynt Gregore / Vnne  
aristeth he out of his synne / that is charged of euyl usage /  
And therfore repentaunte folke that stynte for to synne and  
to lete synne or synne forelete hem / Holy chyrche holdeth hem f  
of her saluacyon / And he that synneth and verily repente  
hym in his laste / Holy chyrche hopyth his saluacyon by t  
greet mercy of our Lord Ihesu cryste for his repentaunce /  
But take ye the siker and certeyn waye / And now sithe  
haue declared you what thyng is penaunce / Now shul  
vnderstande that there be thre actions / The first is that a man  
baptised after that he hath synned / Saynt Augustyn sayth e  
he be penytent for his olde synful lyf / He may not begyn  
the newe clene lyf / For yf he be baptised wythout penyten  
for hys olde gylte / he receybeth the marke of baptisme / but not t  
grace ne the remysyon of his synnes til he haue very repentaun

## The Tale of the Parson

And here begynneth his tale



Jeremie vi/ State super vias et videte & interrogate de viis anti-  
quis/ que sit via bona/ & ambulate in ea/ & inuenietis refrigerium  
animabus vestris & c

**O**ur swete lord god of heuen that no man wil perisse but  
wil that we comen al to the knowlechyng of hym & to the  
blisful lyf that is pardurable amonesteth vs by the pro-  
phete Jeremie that saith in this wyse/ stondeth vpon the wayes / &  
see & aye ye of olde pathys/ that is to seye of olde sentenys which  
is good? weye / And walketh in that weye and that is refresch-  
yng for your soules / Many ben the wayes spirituel that leden  
folke to our lord Iesu Cryste / And to the regne of glorie /  
Of which wayes / There is a ful noble weye and wel coue-  
nable which may not fayle to man ne to woman that thurgh  
synne hath mysgoon fro the right weye of Iherusalem celestyal /

## The Tale of the Parson

And this weye is cleped penytence / Of which man shold gladly  
 herken and enquire with al his herte to wete / what is penytence  
 or penaunce / And wite whens it is clepyd penytence / And  
 how many maners ben the actions of werchyng of penytence &  
 how many spyes there be of penytence / And which thynges be  
 houen and apperteynen to penytence / Saynt ambrose sayth that  
 penytence is the pleyng of the man for the gylt that he hath  
 do / And nomore to doo any thyng for the which hym ought to  
 pleyne / And som doctor sayth / that penaunce is the weymen-  
 tyng of man that soroweth for his synne / And pyneth hym self  
 for he hath mysdon / Penytence wyth certeyn circumstaunce is  
 very repentaunce of man that holdeth hym self in sorow and o-  
 ther peyne for his gyltes / And for he shal be very penitent  
 he shal first belayen the synnes that he hath don / And stedfast-  
 ly purpose in his herte to haue shifte of mouth / And to doo  
 satisfaction and neuer for to doo thyng for which hym oughte  
 more to belayle or compleyne / And to contynue in good werkis  
 Or elles his repentaunce may not auayle / For as sayth saynt  
 Psodre / He is a japer and a gabler and not very repentaunt /  
 that eftsones doth thyng for which hym olbeth to repente ne  
 stynte to doo synne / may not auayle / But netheles men shold  
 take hope that at euery tyme that men falleth he it neuer so ofte  
 that he may aryse through penytence yf he haue grace / But cer-  
 teynly it is greet doute / For as sayth saynt Gregore / Unnethes  
 ariseth he out of his synne / that is charged of euyl usage /  
 And therfore repentaunte folke that stynte for to synne and for  
 to lete synne or synne forelete hem / Holy chyrche holdeth hem sike  
 of her saluacyon / And he that synneth and verily repenteth  
 hym in his laste / Holy chyrche hopyth his saluacion by the  
 greet mercy of our Lord Ihesu cryste for his repentaunce /  
 But take ye the siker and certeyn waye / And now sith I  
 haue declared you what thyng is penaunce / Now shul ye  
 vnderstande that there be thre actions / The first is that a man be  
 baptised after that he hath synned / Saynt Augustyn sayth but  
 he be penitent for his olde synful lyf / He may not begynne  
 the newe clene lyf / For yf he be baptised wythout penytence  
 for hys olde gylt / he receyvethe the marke of baptisme / but not the  
 grace ne the remyssyon of his synnes til he haue very repentaunce

## The Tale of the Parson

Another default is that men done dedly synne after they haue receyued baptisme / The thirde default is that men fulle in venial synnes after her baptisme fro day to day / Theiwo sayth saynt Austyn that penaunce of good and humble folke is the penytence of euery day / The spyes of penaunce ben thre / That one of hem is solempne / Another is comune / And the thyrde is pryncypal / That penaunce that is solempne is in two maners / as is to be put out of holy chyrche in lenton for slaughter of chyldren and such maner thynges / Another is whan a man hath synned openly / of which synne the same is openly knowen in the contree and thene holy chyrche by iugement disteyneth hym for to do open penaunce Somme penaunce is that prestes enioyne men comenly in certeyn cases as for to goo perauenture naked on pylgrymage or bare foot / Pryncypal penaunce is that men doon al day for pryncypal synnes of which we shryuen So pryncypal and receyuen pryncypal penaunce Now shal thou vnderstonde what behoueth and is necessarye to euery pryncypal penitent / and these stonden in thre / Contricion of herte / Confession of mouth / And satisfaction / For whiche Johan Crisostom sayth / Penytence disteyneth to accept benyngnes by euery peyne that is hym enioyned by contricion of herte and shryfte of mouth Wyth satisfaction and worshippe of alle maner humylite / And thys is fruytful penaunce agens the thynges in which we wrathen our lord Ihesu cryst / This is to saye delpte in thynkyng / By recedlesnes in spekyng / by wicked and synful worshippe / Agens these wicked gyltes is penaunce That may be lykened to a tree / The roote of thys tre is contricion that hydeth hym in the herte of hym that is truly repentant right as the roote of a tree hydeth hym in the erthe / Of the roote of contricion spryngeth a stalke that beareth braunches and leuys of confession and fruyt of satisfaction / Of which cryst sayth in the gospel / Do ye dygne fruyt of penytence / For by this fruyt men may knowe thys tre and not by the roote that is hyd in the herte of a man / Nor by the braunches ne leuys of confession And therefore our lord Ihesu Criste sayth thus / By the fruyt of hem ye shal knowe hem / Of thys roote spryngeth a seed of grace which seed is moder of sykenes / And this seed is eger & hote / the grace of this seed spryngeth of god thurgh the remembrance of the day of dome & of the paynes of helle / of this mater

## The Tale of the Parson

Salamon sayth that in the drede of god a man forletteth his  
 synne / the lxx of thys seede is the loue of god and despyng  
 of the Joye perdurable / This lxx dealbeth the lxx of man to  
 god and doth hym hate his synne / For there is nothyng that  
 sauoureth so sore to a chylde as the mylke of his norye / Ne no  
 thyng is to hym more abhomyneable than that mylke whan it is  
 medlyd wyth other mylk / Ryght so the synful man that loueth  
 his synne / hit semeth it is to hym most swete of any thyng /  
 But fro that tyme that he loueth sadly our lord Iesu cryst and  
 desireth the lyf pardurable / there is to hym no thyng more abh  
 mynabyl / For soth the loue of god is the salve of god / For  
 whiche dauid the prophete sayth / I haue loued thy salve and  
 hated wickednes / he that loueth god kepeth his salve and hys  
 word / This the prophete daniel enspired vpon the vysyon  
 of Nabugodonosor whan he counseyllid hym to doo penance /  
 Penance is of the tre of lyf to hem that it receyuen / And he  
 that holdeth hym very penitent is blessed after the sentence of  
 salamon / In thys penance or contricion man shal vnderstande  
 four thynges / that is to saye what is contricion / And whiche  
 be the causes that meuen a man to contricion / And how he  
 shoulde be contrite / And what contricion auayleth to the soule  
 Than is hit thus that contricion is the very sorow that a man  
 reueryneth in his herte for his synnes wyth sad purpose to shry  
 ue hym and to doo penance and neuer more to doo synne / And  
 this sorow shal be in thys maner as sayth saynt bernard / Ht  
 shal be greuous and huy and wel sharp and pynant in herte  
 First for a man hath agylted his lord and his creatour / And  
 more sharpe and pynant for he hath agylted his fader celestyal  
 And yet more sharpe and pynant for he hath brathyd hym and  
 agylt hym that bought hym that wyth his precious blood hath  
 deliuerd hym from the bondes of synne and fro the cruelte of  
 the deuyll and fro the paynes of helle / These causes that meue a  
 man to contricion be vii / First man shal remembre hym of hys  
 synnes / but like that remembraunce be to hym no delite by no weye  
 but grete shame & sorow for his gylt / for Job saith / synful men  
 don verkis worthy of confusion / & therfor saith ezechiel / I wyll  
 Remembre me al the yeres of my lyf in bytternes of my lxx /  
 And god sayth in the apocalips / Remembre yow fro whens

## The Tale of the Parson

that ye befall / For before the tyme that ye sinned ye were the  
chylde of god and lymms of the regne of god / But for  
your synne ye ben waxen thral and foul membris of the fende /  
Hate of aungels / sklaundre of holy chyrche / And fode of the  
fale serpent/perpetuel matter of the fyre of helles / And that more  
foule and abhomyable for ye trespass as oft tyme as doth the  
hound that turneth agayn to ete his owen spuyng / And yet  
fouler for your longe contynuyng in synne and your synful  
usage / For whiche ye be roten in your synnes as a beest in hye  
dung / Suche maner thoughtis maketh a man a shamed for  
his synnes and no delpter as sayth the prophete Ezechiel / Ye  
shul remembre you of your lyves / and they shal dysplese you /  
Bothly synnes ben the lyves that lede folk to helles / The second  
cause that ought to make a man haue despayn of synne is this  
as sayth saynt Peter / who so doth synne is thral to synne / And  
synne putteth a man in grete thraldom / And therefore sayth the  
prophete ezechiel I wente sorowful and had dispayn of my self  
Certes wel ought a man haue dyspayn of synne & withdualbe  
hym fro that thraldom & bybonye / For so whil sayth Seneca in  
this matter he sayth thus / Though I wiste that neyther god  
ne man shold neuer knowe it / Yet wold I haue despayne  
for to do synne / And the same Seneca sayth I am borne to grete  
ter thynges than to be thral to my body/more thral may noman  
ne woman make of his body than yeue his body to synne / And  
were it the foldest chylde or the foldest woman that lyueth and  
lest of kalle / yet he is charged and most foule and most in ser  
uitude euer fro the hyer degre that a man filleth / The more is he  
thral and more to god and to the world vile and abhomyable /  
O good god wel ought a man haue despayne of synne sith  
that thurgh that / there as he was fre noly is he made bonde / and  
therefore sayth saynt Austyn / If thou hast despayne of thy ser  
uaunt / If he agyle or synne haue thou thene no despayne that  
thou thy self sholdst do synne / Take rebarde of thy owen kalle  
that thou ne be to foul to thy self ne to thy / Alas wel oughten  
they that haue dyspayn to be seruaunts and thral to synne / Sore  
to be ashamed of hym self / that god of his endles goodnes hath  
sette in high estate or yue hym strengthe of body/beaute/prosperte  
and bought hym fro the deth wyth hys blete blood / that they so

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Unkyndely agaynste his gentilnes quytten hem so byleynsly to  
slaughter of her olben solbris / O good? god? ye bynmen  
that ben of grete beaute remembre you on the prouerbe of salamon  
He sayth he lykeneth a fayr woman that is a fool of her body to  
a rynge of golde that is born in the groyn of a solbe / for right  
as a solbe brotith in euery ordure / so broteth she her beaute in  
seynkyng? ordure of synne / The thirde cause that ought to meue  
a man to contricyon is drede of the day of dome / And the horrible  
paynes of helle / For as sayth saynt iherome / At euery tyme  
that I remembre of the day of dome / I quake for why I ete or  
drynke or doo what so I do / euer me semeth the trompe solbneith  
in myn eres / Kyseth by that ben dede and come ye to the Jugement  
O good? god much? ought a man to drede such a Jugement there  
as we shal be alle / As sayth saynt paul / Before the seynt ju  
gement of our lord? ihesu cryst / where as we shal make a gene  
ral congregacion / where as no man may be absent / For certis  
there auayleth none esoyne ne none excusacion / And not only  
that our fautes shal be Jugged? but also our werkis shal openly  
be knowen / And? that as sayth saynt bernard? / There ne shal  
no pletynge auayle ne no seynt / We shal geue rekenyng? of eu  
ry yde worde / There shal we haue a Juge that may not be  
dreynd? ne corrupt / And? why for certis al our thoughtis be  
disourde? as to hym ne for prayer ne for mede he wyl not be cor  
rupt / And also he sayth / The wrath of god? wyl not spare no  
wyght for prayer ne for yest / And? therfore at the day of dome  
there is non? hope / wherefore as sayth saynt Anselme / Ful? grete  
anguysh? shal the synful folk haue at that tyme where shal be  
the sterne and? broth? Juge sytting? aboue / And? vnder hym the  
horrible pyt of helle open to destroye hym that wolde not beknowen  
his synis which synnes shullen openly be shewyd? before god? &  
euery creature / And? on the list syde mo deuyces than the herte  
may thynke for to save and? dralbe the synful solbris to the  
pytte of helle / And? bythyn the hertes of folke shal be the bityng  
conscience / And? bythout forth shal his werkis accuse hym /  
Thenne shal the wretchyd? solbe fle to hyde hym / But certis he  
may not hyde hym he must come forth and? shewe hym / For certis  
as sayth saynt iherome / the erthe shal cast hym out of hym and?  
the see also and? the ayer also that shal be ful of thunder clappis

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and? lightnyng / Now sothly who so wyl remembre hym of these thynges I gesse that his synnes shal not torne hym to delpte but to grete sorow for drede of the peny of helle / And? therfor sayth Job to god? / Suffre lord? that I may a whyle helvayle & helvepe or I go retornyng to the deth erthe and? couerdy wyth derkenes the bonde of myserie and? of derkenes where as is shadow of deth where as there is none other ordinaunce but gysly drede that euer shal laste / So here may ye see that Job prayed? wppre a whyle to helvepe and? wvayle his trespass / For sothly one day to wppre is better than al the tresour of this world? / And? for as muche as a man may acquyte hym self by fore god? by peny & tene in this world and? not by tresour / Therfor shold? he praye to god? to peue hym wppre a whyle to helvepyng and? helvaylen his trespass / For artre al the sorow that a man myght make fro the begynnynge of the world nys but a litel thyng at the regarde of the sorow of helle / The cause why that Job clepeth the bond? of derkenes / Understondeyth that he clepyth hit bonde or erthe for it is stable and neuer shal fayle derkenes / For he that is in helle hath defaute of light naturel / For artre the derke light that shal come out of the fyre that euer shal brenne shal torne hem all to peny that he in helle / For it shelberth hym al the hurtyble & upell & that hem tormente couerdy wyth the derkenes of deth that len the synnes that the wretchyd? man hath don / Whyche that distourben hym to see the face of god? / Ryght as a derke cloude he & elvene do and the sonne / Bonde of myserie by cause that there be thre defautes apenst thre thynges that folke of this world? haue in this present lyf / that is to saye / honours / delptes / and? ryces / Apenst honour haue they in helle shame and? confusion / For wel ye wote they clepen honour the reuerence that men den to men / But in helle is non honour ne reuerence / For artre no more reuerence shal be there to a kynge than a knaue / For wiche god? sayth by the prophete Jeremie / The folke that me dyspysen shal be in despyte / Honour is eke clepyd a grete lordshyp there shal no wyght seruen other / but of harme and? turmente / Honour is eke clepyd grete dignyte and? hyghnes / but in helle shal they alle be fortreden wyth deuylls as god? sayth / The horryble deuylls shulle goo and comyn vpon the sedys of dampnyd? folke / And? this is for as muche that the hyer that they

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Where in this present lyf the more they shul be abated and desolb  
led in helle / Avenst the ryches of this world / shal they haue  
myse of pouerte / And this pouerte shal be in four thynges In  
defaute of tresour of which Dauid sayth / The ryche folke that  
enbracen and coueten in al her herte the ryches of this world  
shul slepe in the slepyng of deth / as no thyng shul they fynde  
in there hondes of al her tresour / And more ouer the myse of  
of helle shal be in defaute of mete and drynke / For god sayth  
thus by moyses / ye shal be wasted wyth hunger / And the byr  
des of helle shal deuoure hem wyth bytter deth / And the galle of  
the dragon her mortallys / And further ouer her myse shal be in  
defaute of clothyng for they shal be naked in body as of clothyng  
Saue the fyre in which they brenne and other fylthes / And  
naked shal they be in solble of al maner vertues / which that is  
the clothyng of solble / Where ten thenne the gay robes and the  
soft shertis and fyn shertis / Lo what sayth god of hem by the  
prophete Psalme / that vnder hem shal be scralbed mothes and her  
couertours shal be of wormys of helle / And further ouer her  
myse shal be in defaute of frendes for he is not poure that hath  
good frendys / but there is no frende / For neyther god ne good  
creature shal be frende to hem / And euery of hem shal hate other  
wyth dedely hate / The sones and the daughters shal rebelle avenst  
the fader and moder / And kynde avenst kynde and chyden  
and despyse eche other both day and nyght / as god sayth by the  
prophete mychias / And the buyng chyldren that somme tyme  
loueden so fleschly eueryche of them wolde ete other yf he myght  
For how holdy they loue to gyder in the pynnes of helle / when  
they hate eche other in the prosperyte of this lyf / For truste  
wel her fleschly loue is dedely hate as sayth the prophete Dauid  
why so buyth wickednes he hateth his owen solble / And why so  
hateth his owen solble / Certes he may loue non other wyght in  
no manere / And therefore in helle is no friendship but euer the  
more cursyng the more chydnyng and the more dedely hate is  
among hem / And further ouer they shal haue defaultes of alle  
maner delytes / for why / For delytes ten appetites of the wits  
as sight / heeryng / smellng / sauouryng / and touchyng / but  
in helle her sight shal be ful of derknes / of smoke and ful of  
terris / And her heeryng ful of weymentyng and of gruntynge

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of death as sayth Ihesu cryst / Her nostrylles shal be ful of syn  
kyngz / And as sayth Ysaie the prophete / Her sauourynge shalle  
be ful of bytter galle / And as touchyng her body it shal be coue  
ryd wylly fyre that neuer shal be quenched / And with wormes  
that neuer shal dye as god sayth by the mouth of ysaie / & for  
as muche as they shul not bene þ they molde dye for peyn & by  
death fle fro peyn that may they vnderstonde in the wordz of Job  
that saith that there is þ shadowe of death / certes a shadowe hath a  
lykenes of the thyng of which it is shadowed / ryght so sayth the  
peyne of helle / it is lyke death for the anguyssh horribel / & why /  
For it peyneth hem ever as though men sholde dye anon / But  
certes they shal not dye / For as saith saynt Gregore / to wretched  
caryers shal be death without death and ende without ende & default  
without faylyng / For her death shal alway lyue / And her ende  
shal euer more begynne / And her default shal neuer fayle /  
And therefore sayth Saynt Johan the Euangeliste / They shalle  
folow death and they shal not fynde hym and to desyre to dye  
and death shal fle fro them / And eke Job sayth that in helle is  
none ordre of rule / And al be it so that god hath created al  
in ryght ordre / and nothyng without ordre / But al thynges  
be ordeyned and nombred / Yet netheles they that be dampned  
be no thyng in ordre ne holde non ordre / For the erthe shal bere  
hem no fruyt / For as the prophete Dauid sayth / God shal des  
troye the fruyt of the erthe from hem / He water shal geue hem  
no moysure ne the eyer no refresshyng / ne the fyre no light /  
For as sayth saynt Basyle / The brennyng of the fyre of this  
world shal god geue to hem that ben dampned in helle / But the  
lyght and the clerenes shal be geuen in heuen to his chyldren /  
Right as the good man geueth brede to his children and bones  
to his houndes / And so they shal haue non hope to escape / And  
therefore spekyth Job / At the last there shal horroure & gressly drede  
dwellen withouten ende / Horroure is alle way drede of harme  
that is to come / And this drede shal euer dwelle in the hertes of  
hem that ben dampned / And therefore haue they lost al her hope  
for þ causes / First for god that is her iuge shal be withouten  
mercy to hem / ne they may not plesse hym ne none of his beholles  
ne may paye no thyng for theyr ransom ne they haue no wyse to  
speke to hym / ne they may not fle fro peyne / And therefore saith

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Salamon / the wicked man dweth / And when he is dede he shal  
haue none hope to escape from payne / Who so wolde wel vnder-  
stonde these paynes and bethynke hym wel that he hath deservyd  
the paynes for his synnes / Certes he sholde haue more talent to  
sighte and wepe than for to synge and for to pleye / For as sayth  
Salamon / Who that had the science for to knowe the paynes  
that ben establisshyd and ordeyned for synne he wolde forsake  
synne / That science sayth saynt Austyn makith a man to wepe &  
menten in his herte / The fourth point that a man ought to  
make contricion fore / is the sorowful remembraunce of the good  
that he hath left to doo here in erthe and eke the good that he hath  
born / Sothly the good werkys that he hath left / either they be  
the good werkys that he wrought er he fylle in to dedely synne  
or elles the good werkys that he wrought whyle he lay in dedely  
synne / Sothly the good that he dyd before that he fyl in dedely  
synne ben al mortyfied / astoned and dulled by the eft synnyng  
The other werkys that he wrought whyle he lay in synne ben vt-  
terly dede as to the lyf perdurable in heuen / Than thylke good  
werkys that ben mortyfied by eft synnyng whiche good werkys  
he dyd whyles he was in charite moche neuer quicken agen with-  
out very resceynt and wythdrawyng the strenges of mannes  
corage and the meynynges in his herte in such manere as they ne  
skyppe out by anger ne by yre / And therof sayth god by the  
mouth of Ezechiel / That yf the rightful man retorne agayn  
from his rightwysnes and to wycke wyckednes / shal he lyuen  
naye / For al the good werkys that he hath wrought shulle ne-  
uer be in remembraunce / For he shal dye in his synne / And  
vpon that chappitre sayth saynt gregory thus that we shul vnder-  
stonde pryncipally that when we do dedely synne it is nought /  
Neyther for to dralle in to memorye the good werkys that we  
haue wrought byfore / For certes in the werkynge of dedely  
synne there is no trust to good werke that we haue don before /  
That is to say as to haue thereby the lyf perdurable in heuen / But  
sothly the good werkys that men don whyles they ben in dedely  
synne For as mykyl as they were don in dedely synne they may  
neuer quicken / For certes thynges that neuer  
had lyf may neuer quicken / And netheles al be it that they  
auayle not to haue the lyf perdurable / yet auaylen they to a

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bydage of the pyyn of helle / Or elles to gete temporel riches / or  
elles that godd wyll rather enlumyne and lygheten the herte of  
the synful man to haue repentaunce / And eke they auayle to a  
man to doo goodd werkes that the fende hath the lasse polver of  
his solbke / And thus the curteis lordd Ihesu cryst wyll that no  
goodd werke be loste / For in somwhat it shal auayle / but for  
as moche that the goodd werkes that men don whyles they ben in  
goodd lyf ben al mortyfied by synne folowynge / And eke sythe  
al the goodd werkes that men don whyles they be in dedely synne  
ben vttarly dede as for to haue the lyf pardurable / Wel may that  
man that no goodd werke doth syng that fasth nelle songe / Day  
tout perdu mon temps et mon labour / For certes it treueth a  
man goodnes and nature and eke the goodnes of grace / for soth  
the grace of the holy goost fareth as fyre that may not be yde /  
For fyre fayleth anon as it leseth his werchyng / Than leseth the  
synful man the goodnes of glorie that only is becomen to goodd  
men that labouren and werken / Wel may he be sory thenne that  
olbeth al his lyf to godd as long as he lyueth / And eke as  
longe as he shal lyue / that no goodnes hath to paye with hys  
dette to godd to whom he olbeth al his lyf / For trust wel he shall  
peue accountys / as sayth saynt Bernard / Of alle the goodes that  
haue he peuen hym in thys present lyf / And how he hath despen  
ded them not so muche that there shal pershe an hreer of his heed  
ne a moment of an houre that he ne shal peue them a rekenyng /  
The fyrste thyng is that ought to meue a man to contricion is  
remembraunce of the passyon that our lordd Ihesu suffryd for our  
synnes / For as sayth saynt Bernard / Whyles that I lyue I  
shal haue remembraunce of the traueles that our lordd Ihesu crist  
suffryd in prechyng / his werynes in trauelyng / his temptacions  
whan he fasted / his longd wakynge whan he prayd / his tress  
whan he wepte for pyte of goodd peple / the woo and the shame  
and the fylthe that men sayden to hym / of the foule spyttyng  
that men spytten in his face / of the buffetis that men gaf hym  
of the foule mouthys and of the foule reppurys that men to hym  
sayden / of the nayles wyth the whiche he was nayled to the crosse  
And of alle the remenaunt of his passyon that he suffryd for  
mannys synne and no thyng for his gylte / And ye shal vnder  
stande that euery maner ordre of ordenaunce is turned by so

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down / For it is soth that godd and reson and sensualite and the body of a man ben so ordeyned / that eueryche of thysse four thynges shul haue lordshyp ouer that other as thus godd shold haue lordshyp ouer reson / And reson ouer sensualite and sensuallite ouer the body of man / but sothly in man semeth al this order of ordenaunce is turned vnder so down / And therefore thenne for as mychel as the reson of man wyl not be subget ne obeiissaunt to godd that is lord by right / Therefore lesith it the lordshyp that it shold haue in sensualite and eke ouer the body of man / And Why for sensualite rebelleth thenne ayenst reson / And by that wey lesith reson his lordshyp ouer sensualite and ouer the body / For ryght as reson is rebel to godd / Ryght so is sensualite rebel to reson and the body also / And certes thys ordenaunce / And thys rebelloun our lord Ihesu Crist aboughte upon his body well deer / And herkeneth in Whyche wyse / For as mychel thenne as reson is rebel to godd therefore is man worthy to haue sorowe and to be dede / This suffred our lord Ihesu for man after he was betrayed of his disaple and dysceyved and bounde so that the blood brast out at euery nagle of his hondes as sayth saynt Augustyn / And ferthermore for as mychel as reson of man wyl not daunte sensualite whan it may / Therefore is man worthy to haue shame And this suffred our lord Ihesu crist for man whan they spitten in his dysage / And ferther ouer thenne for as muche as the captif body of man is rebel both to reson and to sensualite therefore it is worthy the deithe / And thys suffrid our lord Ihesu Crist for man vpon the crosse / Where as there was no parte of his body free thythout grete payn & bitter passion / And at this suffred Ihesu crist that neuer forfeted / To muche am I payned for the thynges that I neuer descripyd and to mychel defouled for frendshyp that man is worthy to haue / And therefore may the synful man wel saye as saynt bernard sayth / A cursid be the bytternes / For certes after dyuerse dyscordaunces of out wyckednes was the passyon of Ihesu crist ordeyned in dyuerse thynges as thus Certes synful mannys soule betrayed the deuyll by couetyse of temporel prosperyte and scornys by dysceyt whan he chastyth flesshly delectes / And is tormented by impacience of aduersite and despight by seruage in subiection of synne / & atte last he is slayn synally / for thys dyscordaunce of synful man / was Ihesu Crist

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first betrayed / And after that was he bounde that cam for to bryn-  
dynde be of synne and of the payne / Therne was he rescourged  
that only shold be honourid in al thynges and of alle thynges  
Thenne was his bysage bespytt that ought to be despyrd for to  
be scyn of al mankynde / In which bysage aungels desern to  
like / and therein was vileynsly bespytt / Tenne was he scorned  
that no thyng had gyllt / And synally tenne was he crucified  
and sleyn / Tenne were complysshed the wordes of Psalme that  
sayth / He was wounded for our mysdoes and defouled for  
our bysones / Nolv sith that Ihesu cryst toke on hym self the  
payne of al our bykednes / myght ought synful man to bepe  
and to belyaple that for his synnes goddys sone of heven shold  
al thys payne endure /

The vij thyng that ought to meue a  
man to contricion is the hope of thre thynges that is to saye for-  
geuenes of synne / and the yeste of grace wel for to do / And  
the ioye of heven wyth the which god shal guerdon man for his  
good dedes / And for as muche as Ihesu Crist yueyth be the yest  
tis of his grace & of his souerayn bounte / Therefore is he clepyd  
Ihesus Nazarenus Rex Judeorum / Ihesus is for to save saup  
our or sauacion on whom men shul hope to haue forpeuenes of  
synnes / which that is properly sauacion of synnes / And  
therefore sayd the aungel to Joseph / Thou shalt clepe hys name  
Ihesus that shal saue his peple of her synnes / And Iwof sayth  
scynt peter / There is none other name vnder heuyn that is geuen  
to ony man by which a man may be saupd but only Ihesus /  
Nazarenus is as muche to saye as for flourishyng in which a man  
shal hope that he that yueyth hym remysyon of synnes shal also  
yeue hym grace wel for to do / For in the flour is hope of fruyt  
in tyme comyng / And in forpeuenes of synne hope of grace wel  
to doo / I was atte dore of thyn herte sayd Ihesus and cleped for  
to entre / he that openeth to me shal haue forpeuenes of synnes /  
I wyll entre in to hym by my grace / and soupe wyth hym by the  
good werkes that he shal doo / which werkes ben the fode of  
god / And he shal soupe wyth me by the grete ioye that shal be  
yeuen to hym / Thus shal man hope that for his werkes of pe-  
naunce god shal yeue hym his regne as he becometh hym in the  
gaspell / Nolv shal man vnderstonde in what manere shal be his  
contricion / I saye hit shal be vniuersal and total / that is to

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saye a man shal be veray repentaunt for alle his synnes that he hath don in delpte of hys thought / For delpte is perperous / For there be two maners of consentynge that one of hem is cleped consentynge of affection / Whan a man is meued to doo synne agens the lawe of god / Al though his reson consente not to do synne in dede / Yet seyn som doctours and men that suche delpte that dwellyth longe is ful perperous / al be it neuer so lye / And als so a man shold sorowe namely for al that ever he hath despyed agens the lawe of god wyth passyng consentynge to the dede Wherfore I say that many men repente hem netier of suche thoughtes and delites and neuer shryue hem of it but only of the dede of grete synnes outwarde / Wherfore I say that suche wicked delites and wicked thoughtes ben subtil begylars of hem that shal be dampned / More ouer man ought to sorowe for his wycked wordes and for his wicked dedes / For certes repentaunce of a syn singular synne and not repentyng of alle his other synnes / or elles repentyng hym of alle his other synnes and not of a singular synne may not auayle / For certes god almyghty is al good And therfor he foryeueth al or elles right nought / And therfore sayth saynt Austyn / I wrote certeynly that god is enemy to euery synnar / And hold than be that obserueth one synne / shal he haue foryeuenes of the remenaunt of his other synnes / nay / a fertherouer contricion shold be wonder sorowful & anguysshous And therfore prayeth hym god pleyndly his mercy / And therfore whan my soule was anguysshous wythyn me I had remembraunce of God that my prayer myght come to hym / Furtherouer contricion muste be contynuel and that men haue stedfast purpose to shryue hem and for to amende hem of her lif / For sothly wyple contricion lasteth / man may haue hope of foryeuenes / And of this cometh hate of synne that deseruyeth synne both in hym self and eke in other folke at hys wolber / For wyple Dauid sayth / Ye that louen god / Hate wyckednes / For trusteth wel to loue god is for to loue that he loueth and hate that he hateth / The last thyng that a man shal vnderstonde in contricion is thys Wherof auayleth contricion / I say somtyme that contricion deliuereth a man fro synne / Of wyple Dauid sayth / I say god dauid / I purpose firmly to shryue me and thou lord hast relead my synne / And right so as contricion auayleth not wythout sad

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purpose of shryfte and satisfaction / right so confessyon ne satisf-  
faction auayle not wythout contricion / For muche contricion  
deseruyeth the pryson of helle / And makyth weak and feeble the  
strength of the deuyll / And restoreth the pece of the holy ghoost  
and of alle vertues and interclensyth the soule of synne and  
deluyereth the soule fro the payne of helle and fro the company of  
the deuyll / And fro seruage of synne / And restoreth to alle  
goodes spirituel in to the companye and comunyon of holy  
chyrche / And further ouer hit maketh hym that was whyllom  
sone of yre / to be the sone of grace / And alle these thynges he  
putteth to holy writ / And therefore he that wyl sette his entree  
to these thynges he wete ful wyse / For thenne he shold not in  
al his lyf haue corage to synne / But thenne his body and alle  
his herte he sholde confourme to the scruple of Ihesu Crist / And  
therefore doo hym homage for artres our Sweet lord Ihesu Crist  
hath sparyd vs so benygely in our folkes that yf he ne had pyte  
on mannes soules / A sory songe myght we alle synge /

*Explicit prima pars penitencie*

*Incipit secunda pars /*

**T**he second part of penytence is confessyon / and that  
is signe of contricion / Now shal ye vnderstonde what  
is confession / and whether it ought nedes to be or none /  
and which thynges ben couenable to very confessyon /  
First shalt thou vnderstonde that confessyon is very shewyng of  
synne to the prest / this is to say very / for he must confesse hym of  
al the condicions that he longyng to his synne as for forth as he  
can / al must he sayd & nothyng excused ne hid ne forbrayd and  
not auaunte hym of his good werkys / And furtherouer it is  
necessarie to vnderstande whens that synnes spryngen / And  
how they entreen / And there ben spryngyng of synnes as sayth  
Seynt Poule in this wyse / That ryght as by a man synne en-  
tredd first in to this world / And thurgh that synne deyde /

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Myght so deith entred in to alle men that synned / And this man was Adam by whom that synne entred in to this world / When he brake the commaundment of god / And therefore he that first was so myghty that he shold not haue dyed / became such one that he must nedes dye whether he wolde or no and al his progeny that is in this world that in that maner synne dyen / Loke that in the state of Innocence when Adam & Eve were naked in paradys and no shawe had of her nakednes / hold that the serpent that was most wylly of al othe bestys that god had made sayde to the woman / commaunded god to you ye shold not ete of euery tre in paradys / The woman answered of the fruyt sayde she of the trees in paradys we foden vs / But forthe of the fruyt of the tre that is in the myddel of paradys / God forbode vs for to ete ne to touche it lest perauenture we shal dye / The Serpent sayde to the woman / nay / nay ye shal not dye of deith / For soth god boote that what day that ye ete therof your eyes shalle open and ye shalle be as goddes knowynge good and harm /

The woman sawe that the tre was good to fedynge and fayne to the eye and delectable to the syght / So took of the fruyt of the tre and ete of hit / And yf of hit to her husbonde / And he eet / And anon the eyes of hem both openyd / And when they knewe that they were naked / They soluyd of a fyge tree leuys in maner of brechys to hyden her membris / Here may ye see that deely synne hath first suggestyon of the fende / As shelbyth here by the adder / And afterwarde the delect of the flesh as shelbyth here by Eve / And after by consentynge of reson as shelbyth by Adam / For trust wel though so were the fende temptyd one that is to saye the flesh / And the flesh had delect in the beaute of the fruyt defendyd / Yet wertes tye that reson that is to saye / Adam consentyd to the etynge of the fruyt / He stode hygh in the state of Innocence Of that Adam toke we that synne orygynal / For of hym fleschly descended ben we al and engendrid of vile and corrupt matter / & when the soule is put in our body right anon is contract orygynal synne / And that was only payne of concupiscence / whiche is afterwarde both payne and synne / And therefore be we alle born sonnes of wrath and of dampnacion perdurable yf we be baptysme that we receyue / Whych benyngmeth vs the culpe / But forsothe the

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penes dwelle with vs as the temptation / which pen synne  
concupiscence / And this concupiscence when it is wrongfully  
disposed or ordeyned in man / Hit maketh hym coueyte coue-  
tise of flesh and flesshly synne by synne of his eyen as to earthes  
by thynges / And eke couetise of synnes by pryde of herte /  
Now as for to speke of the first couetise that is concupiscence  
after the salve of our membres that were lawfully made and by  
ryghtful iugement of god / I say for as much as a man  
is not obeyssaunt to god that is his lord / Therefore is his herte  
to hym dysobeyssaunt / Thruugh concupiscence / Hit is impossible  
but he be tempted som tyme and noyed in his flessh to synne /  
And this thyng may not faile as long as he lyueth /  
Hit may wel be feble and faile by vertu of baptisme / And  
by the grace of god thruugh penitence / But fully shal it ne-  
uer quene / That he ne shal somtyme be meuyd in hym self  
but yf he were alwys freynde by synnes or by malice of forsyte  
or colde drynkes / For what sayth saynt poule / The flessh  
coueyteth ayenst the spyte / And the spyte ayenst the flessh  
they ben so contrarye / And so stryuen that man may not doo  
all day as he wolde / The same saynt poule after his grete  
penaunce in water and in bonde by nyght and by day by grete  
payn and in grete pain in bonde in grete faimyn and thrist in  
colde and ones stoned almost to deeth / Yet said he alas I captif  
man / who shal deliuer me fro the prysoun of my captif body /  
And saynt iherome sayd / when he long tyme had dwelled in desert  
where as he had no company but bestes where as he had no mete  
but herbis & water to his drynk ne no bed but the naked erthe /  
For which his flessh was black as an ethiops for he & destroyed  
for colde / Yet sayde he the brennyng of heuyns boyled in alle  
his body / wherefore I wrote wel sikely that they be dysceyued  
that say that they be not tempted in her sede spryngynge /  
As wel may a chorde be saued as the lord / The same deeth that  
the chorde taketh the lord taketh / Wherefore I rede doo ryght so  
by thy chorde / As thou woldest thy lord dyd with the yf thou  
were in his plyght / Every synful man is chorde to synne  
I rede the certis thou lord that thou teldest the in such wyse  
that thy chorde rather loue the thenne hate the /  
I wrote well there is degre above degre as reson is and skille is

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that men do her deuoure there as it is due / But certes extorcion  
and despytes of your vnderlynges is dampnable And further &  
more vnderstonde wel that conquerours or tyrauntis maken wel  
of thralles of hem that ben borne of as ryal blood as they that  
hem conqueren / This name of thraldom was neuer knowen  
erste tyl that Noe sayd / his sone canaan shold be thral to his  
brethern for his synne / What saye we thenne of them that pylle  
and doo extorcions to holy chyrche / Certes the slyberde that  
men geuen first to a knyght whan he is newe dubbyd signefieth  
that he shold defende holy chyrche and not robbe hem / And  
who so doth is a traytour to crist as saith Saynt Austyn /  
Tho ben the deuyllis wolups that strangelen the sheep of Ihesu  
Crist and don worse than wolups / For soth whan the wolf  
hath ful his wombe he stynteth to strangle sheep / But sothly the  
pyllours and destroyers of goodes of holy chyrche do not so /  
For they stynte neuer to pylle / Now haue I sayd syn so is that  
synne was first cause of thraldom and subiection / But certes  
sith the tyme of grace cam / God ordeyned that som folke shold  
be made more in high estate and high degre / And som folke  
more lowe / And that eueryche shold be scruped in his astate and  
his degre / And therfore in som contrees there as they ben thral  
lis / When they haue turned hem to the feyth / they make her  
thralles free out of thraldom / And therfore certes the lord olbith  
to his man / that the man olbeth to the lord / The Pope clepyth  
hym self seruaunt of seruantes of god / But for as muche  
as the state of holy chyrche myght not be kept in rest ne in pees  
in erthe / But yf god had ordeyned that som men haue heryer  
degre / And som men lower / Therfore was soueraynte ordeyned  
to kepe and mayntene and defende her vnderlynges or her subiecs  
as in reson as for forth as it lyeth in her power / And not to des  
troye hem ne confounde / wherfore I say thylk lordes ben wolups  
that deuouren the possessiouns or the catel of other folke wrong  
fully without mercy or mesure / They shul be releuyd by  
the same mesure that they haue mesured to poure folke for the  
mercy of Ihesu Crist but they it amende / Now shul ye vnder  
stonde in what maner synne vexeth and encreaseth in man / The  
first thyng is that norisschyng of synne of which I spak before  
that is concupiscence / And after that cometh subiection of the

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deuyl / That is to saye the deuylis helpe / With which he blys  
wyth in man the fyre of concupysce / And after that a man  
kethynketh hym whether he wol doo or no that thyng to which  
he is tempted / And than yf that a man wythstonde and wepue  
the first tpsyng of his flessh and of the sence / than it is no  
synne / And yf so be he doo not than feleth he anon a flame of  
delite / And than it is good to helpe and to kepe hym well  
or elles he wyl falle anon in to consentyng of synne / And than  
wyl he doo hit yf he may haue tyme and space / And of thys  
mater sayth moyses by the deuyl in thys maner / The sence sayth  
I wyl chace and purselue the man by Wickyd subgessyon /  
And I wyl honte hym by meynyng or sterynge of synne / And  
I wyl departe my pryse or my pray by deliberation / And my lust  
shal be accomplisshed in delyte / I wyl dwelbe my slyerde in  
consentyng / For certis right as a slyerde departeth one in two  
peces / Right so consentyng departeth god from man /  
And thenne wyl I see hym wyth my honde in deth of synne /  
Thus sayth the sence / For certis thenne is a man al dede in soule  
And thus is synne complisshed by temptation / by delyte and  
by consentyng / And thenne synne is chyd a meruaylle / For  
soth synne is in two maners / epyther it is venyal or dedely synne  
Bothly whan a man loueth ony creature more than Ihesu Cryst  
our creatur thenne it is dedely synne / And venyal synne yf a  
man loue Ihesu criste lesse than hym ought / Forsothe the dede of  
thys venyal synne is ful perpyous for hit amenuseth the loue that  
man sholde haue to god more and more / and therefore yf a man  
charge more hym self with many such venyal synnes / certis but  
yf so be that he discharge of hem by shrift / they may wel lightly  
amenuse in hym al the loue that he hath to Ihesu criste / And in this  
wise skipeth venyal synne in to dedely synne / For certis the more  
that a man chargeth his soule with venyal synnes the more is he  
inclyned to dedely synne / And therefore keet be not be negligent  
in dischargyng be of venyal synne / For the prouerbe sayth  
many smale makyth a grete / And herkene thys ensauple  
A grete walbe of the see comyth somtyme wyth so grete a byo  
lence that it drencheth the shyp / And the same harme  
doo somtyme the smale dreyes of water / That entre thurgh a  
litil creupe in the thurok & in the botom of the shyp yf men be so

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neglygent that they discharge hem not by tyme / And therefore  
al though there be difference betwene thise two causes of drechynge  
yet algates the ship is drynt / Ryght so faryth it somtyme of  
dedely synne and of anopous venyal synnes whan they mul-  
plye in man so greatly that the worldly thynges that he loueth  
thruogh which he synneth venyally is as grete in his herte as the  
loue of god or more / And therefore the loue of euery thyng  
that is not lesse ne don pryncipally for goddes sake / al though  
a man loueth lesse than god / yet is hit venyal synne / And  
dedely synne is whan the loue of ony thyng lyeth in the herte  
of man as muche as the loue of god or more / Dedely synne as  
sayth saynt Austyn is whan a man turneth his herte from god  
whych that is very souerayn bounte that may not be chaunged  
And yeueth his herte to a thyng that may chaunge and flytte /  
And certes that is euery thyng saue god of heuen /  
Forsothe yf that a man yeeue his loue which he oweth to god  
wyth al his herte vnto a creature certes so muche of loue as he  
yeueth to such a creature / so muche bereueth he fro god / And  
therefore doth he synne / For he that is detowr to god ne yeldeth  
not al his dette to god that is to say alle the loue of his herte /  
Nolw ith a man vnderstandeth generally which is venyal  
synne / Than is it couenable to telle specyally of synnes which  
that many a man perauenture demeth hem not synnes and shew-  
ueth hem not of the same synnes / And yet netheles they be  
synnes / And sothly as clerkes wryten thys is to say that euery  
tyme that a man eateth and drynketh more than suffyseth to  
sustenauunce of his body certeyn he doth synne /  
Eke whan he harkeneth not the compleynt of the poure men /  
Eke whan he speleth more than it nedeth it is synne /  
Eke whan he is in helthe of body and wyl not faste whan other  
men faste wythout cause resonable / Eke whan he slepeth more  
than nedeth / or whan he cometh by that encheson to late to churche  
or to other werkis of charite / Eke whan he useth his wyf withou-  
ten desire souerayn of engedrure to thonour of god or for thentent  
to yelde his wyf the dette of his body / eke whan he wyl not by-  
site the yke or the prisoners whan he may / eke yf he loue wyf or  
childe or ony othar worldly thyng more than reson requyret / eke  
yf he flatter or blaundyse more than hym ought for ony necessity

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Eke yf he ameuuse or wythdraue the almes of the poure / eke  
yf he apparayle his mete more delyciously than neede is or ete it  
o hastily by lechroufnes Eke yf he talke ranytres in the chyrche  
or at goddes seruyse or that he be a talker of yde wordes of folye  
or of vyllonye / For he shal geue accountes of hit at the day of  
rome / eke whan he lecheth or assureth to do thynges that he may  
not performe / eke whan by lightnes of folye myssereth or scor  
yth his neyghbour / Eke whan he hath ony wycked? suspencion  
of thyng there he woot of hit no sothfastnes / These thynges and  
noo wythouten nombre be synnes as sayth saynt Austyn / Now  
hal ye vnderstonde that al be hit so that none erthly man may  
schelbe al venyal synnes / yet may he refreyne hym by the breng  
yng loue that he hath to our lord? Ihesu cryste / And? by prayers  
and? confessyon and? other good? werkkes so that it shal but litle  
griue / For as sayth saynt Austyn / yf a man loue god? in  
uche maner that al that euer he doth is in the loue of god? or for  
the loue of god? / loke how mykyl that a droppe of water that fal  
yth in a furnyce ful of fyre annoyeth or greuyth so mykyl annoy  
yth a venyal synne vnto a man that is purficht in the loue of Ihu  
Cryst / Men may also refreyne venyal synne by the receyuyng  
of the precious body of Ihesu Cryste / by receyuyng eke of holy  
water / by almes dede / by general confessyon of confessor at masse  
and? at pryme and? complyne / And? by blissinge of bysshoppes  
and? of prestes and? by other good? werkkes /

### De septem peccatis mortalibus / Incipit de superbia

**N**ow it is behouely thyng to tellyn whiche ten dedely  
synnes / that is to saye captyf of synnes / Alle they renne  
in to colles but in dyuerce maner / Now be they leped?  
captyfs for as muche as they be chref and? spryngyng  
of alle other synnes / Of the rote of thys / vii / synne is pryde  
the general rote of al harmys for of thys rote spryngen arcyen  
braunches / as ire / enuy / acadye or sbouthe / auarice or couetise to  
comyn vnderstandyng / glotony and? lechery / And? eueryche of  
thys synnes hath his braunches and? his wygges as shalle be

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declared in her chappytres folowynge/ and though so be that man knowyth not vnterly the nombre of the vices & of the harmes that comen of pryde / yet wyl I shewe a partye of hem as ye shal vnderstonde / There is incedyence / auauentyng / pprocysse / despyte / arrogancye / Imprudence / swelkynge of herte / Insolence / Elacion / pertynacye / weyn glorie / And many other vices that I can not declare / Incedyent is he that dysobeyeth for despite to the commaundement of god and to his souerayn and to his gostly fader / Auauentur is he that auauenteth hym of the harme or of the bounte that he hath don / Pprocysse is he that hideth to shewe hym such as he is / And sheweth hym to the peple to seme such as he is not / Dispitous is he that hath dysdayn of his neyghbour that is to saye of his euen cristen and hath despyte to do that hym ought to do / Arrogant is he that thynketh that he hath that bounte in hym that he hath not / or beneth that he shold haue hit by his deserte / or ellys that he demeth that he be that he is not / Imprudent is he that for his pryde hath no shame for his synne / Swelkynge of herte is whan a man reioysseth hym of harm that he hath don / Insolent is he that dyspyseth in his Iugement alle other folke as to the regarde of his kalue and of his conyng and of his spekyng and of his leryng / Elate is he whan he may nether suffre to haue mayster ne folowe / Impacient is he that wyl not be taught ne vndercome of his vyces and by stiff warrpyth ayenst trouthe wetyngly and defendeth his foly / Contumace is he that thurgh his Indignacion is ayenst euery auctorite or polber of hem that sen his souerayn / Presumpcion is whan a man taketh an empryse that hym ought not to do / or ellis he may it not doo / And that is callyd surquydry / Irreuerence is whan a man doth not honour there as hym ought to doo and wayteth to be reuerenced / Pertynacy is whan a man defendeth his foly and trusteth to mykyl to his owen wytt / Weyn glorie is for to haue poysse and delyte in temporel hyghnes & glorye hym in worldly estates / Dangelyng is whan a man spekyth to mykyl to fowle folke and clappith as a mylle and taketh no kepe what he sayth / And there is yet a pryue spede of pride that wayteth first to be saleded or he saled / al be he lesse worthy than that other, is prauenture and eke he wayteth to sytte or to goo aboue hym in the wyne or kyssse pay or he sensyd or go to offeryng before

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his neyghbour and such a proude desyre to be magnifyed and  
honoured before the peple / Now ben there two maners of pryde  
that one of them is wythyn the herte of a man / And that other  
is without / Of which forsayd thynges and moo than I haue  
sayd appertaynen to the pryde that is wythyn the herte of man /  
And there be also other spyes of pryde that be wythouten / But  
nevertheless one of these spies of pryde is signe of that other / Right  
as the gay leffel of tauerne is signe of the wyne that is in the  
feler / and this is in many thynges as in speche in countenaunce  
in outrageousnes / of array of clothyng / Crist wolde not so sone  
haue noted and spoken of the clothyng of that ryche man in the  
gospel but yf it had be synne / For as sayth saynt gregore /  
Precious clothyng is culpable for the derthe of hit and for his  
strangenes / for his dysguysynges and for the superfluyte / or  
for the inordynate scantnes / As to the first synne that is in super  
fluyte of clothyng / Which that maketh it so dexe to harm of the  
peple that only the coste of the enswoldyng / The dysguysyng enden  
tyng / or carryng / oundyng / palyng and semblable wyse of clo  
thyng in vanyte / There is also coselid furrpnyng in golbnes / And  
also myghyl pounsyng of chesel to make hoolis so myghil daggyng  
of strais with the superfluyte in lengthe of the forsayd golbnes  
trayplyng in the dunge and in the myre on hors and eke on foot  
as wel of man as of woman / that al that trayplyng is truly as  
in effect wasted / consumed / thredbare and wten wyth dunge wa  
ther than it is geuen to the poure / to grete damage of the forsayd  
poure folke and that in sondry wyse / this is to sayn the more  
that cloth is wasted the more must hit coste for the scarsenes /  
And furtherouer yf they wolde geue such pounsid and daggid  
clothes to the poure folke / it is not conuenient to bere for her  
estate ne suffiaient to her necessyte / On that other syde for to speke  
of the disordynat scantnes of clothyng as ben these cutted shoppis  
or hantelynes that thurgh her shortnes couer not the shamefull  
membres of a man to wicked entente / Alas somme of hem  
shelben in the shap and the boos of the horryble swollyn membris  
that semen like to the maladie of hyrma in the wrappnyng of her  
hospyn and eke the buttokys of hem keshynd that faren as it  
were the hynderparte as a six ape in the ful of the mone / And  
more ouer the wretched swollyn membris that they shalbe in

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disgysnyng in departynge of her hosen whyt and red semeth that half the preuy members weren fleyen / And so by that they departen her hosen in other colours as is whyt and black/or whyt and blelbe /or black and red and so forth / Than semeth it as by varyance of colour that half the part of his preuy members ben corrupt by the fyre of saynt antonye / or by Canker / or by other suche myschaunces / yet of the hynder parte of her buttocks it is wel horryble for to see / For certes in that partye of her body there as they purgen her styngynge ordure /that foul party shelve they proude to the peple in despyte of honeste / whiche honeste that Ihesu crist and his frendes obserued to shelve in his lyf /

Holb as to outrageous aray of woman / godd boote though the visage of hem seme ful chaste and debonayr / yet notwhen they in theyr aray of a tyte / lichorousnes and pryde / I saye not that honeste in clothynge of man and woman is vnouenable / But certes the superfluyte or dysforynat skaract of clothynge is reprouable / Also the synne of ornement or in apparell as in thynges that apperteyne to rydng / as in many delectable horses that be holden for delect by cause they be so fayr fat and coselible / and also many a vicious kytte mayntened by cause of hem / And in curyous harnays as in saddles / cropers / pextrells / and byrdels couped wyth precious cloth and rich harnes and plates of gold and siluer / For whiche godd sayth by Zakarie the prophete / I wil confounde the ryders on suche horsis / These folk taken lital regarde of rydng of goddes sene and his harnays whan he rood vpon an asse and had non other harnays but the clothys of hys poure disciples / Ne we rede not that he rode euer on ony other best / I speke thus that of superfluyte / not for the honeste whan reison it requyret / And furtherouer certes pryde is gretly notified in holdynge of grette meyne whan they be of lital prouffyt / And namely whan the meyne is felonous and damageous to the peple by hardynes of her lordshyp or by weye of offyce / For certes suche lordys sellen her lordshippes to the deuyll of litle / whan they susteyne the wickednes of her meyne / or elles whan these folke of halbe degre as they that holden hostelryes susteyn theft by theyr hostelers and that is in many maners of dysceytes / suche maner of folk ben the flies that folowen the hony / Or ellis the houndes that folowen the careyn whiche forsayd folke stranglen

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spirituallly her lordshipp/ For whiche thus sayth dauid wickednes  
moot come on the lordshippis / And god geue that they molde  
desceide down in to hell / For in her holtes is iniquite and  
shrewdnes and not god of heuen / And certes yf thou doo no  
mendment right as god yaf his blessing to laban by cause of  
Jacob and to pharaon for the scrupel of Joseph / Right so wyl  
god yeeue his malyson to such lordes that susteyne the wicked-  
nes of her seruauntes / But the comyn pride of the table apperith  
eke ful ofte / For certes rich men be clepyd to festys and pour  
folk be put albey and rebuked / And there is exesse of dyuete  
metes and drynkes and namely of curious maner of bakemetis  
and of semblable wast so that it is abusion for to thynke / And  
eke in grete preciousnes of vessel and curiosite of mynystrealce  
by the whiche a man is streyd more to the delites of luxur / Yf  
so be that he sette his herte the lesse vpon our lord Iesu Crist  
certeyn it is a synne / And certes the delicate metis and the de-  
lite myght be so grete in the cas that men myght the righter  
falle by hem in to dedely synne / The spys that sourden of pryde  
Sothly is whan they sourden of malice ymagyned and caryed  
and forncast or ellys of vsage / Ten dedely synnes it is no doute  
And whan they sourden by freelte vnauyed so delynt / & so delynt  
wythdrawe agayn / al be they greuous synnes / I gesse and  
suppose they be not dedely / Noli myght men aye wroth that  
pride sourdeth and spryngeth / And I say that somtyme it spryn-  
geth of goodes of nature / And somtyme of the goodes of fortune  
And somtyme of the goodes of grace / Certes the goodes of natu-  
re stonden in the goodes of body or of soule / Certes the goodes  
of the body ten be of body / strengthe / deliquenes / beaute / gen-  
trye and fraunchise / The goodes of nature of the soule ten / good  
wytte wyth sharpe vnderstondynge / subtil engyne / vertu naturall  
good memorie / Goodes of fortune ten riches / high degrees of  
lordshippis and preysynges of the peple / Goodes of grace ten  
saience / polver to suffre spiritual triauyle / benygnytes / vertuous  
contemplacion / withstandynge of temptacion and semblable thynges  
/ Of whiche forsayde goodes certes it is a grete folwe a man  
to priden hym in ony of hem alle / Noli as for to speke of goodes  
of nature god wote that som tyme we haue them in nature as  
much to our damage as to our prouffyt / As for to speke of be-

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of body certes it passyth ful lightly / And eke it is ful ofte  
thenceforn of the sikenes of the soule / For godd boote the flessh  
is a ful greet enemy to the soule / And therfore the more that a  
body is hool / the more he be in payl to falle / Eke for to pryde  
hym in his strengthe of body it is a greet folye / For certes the  
flessh coueyteth ayenst the spyrite / And euer the more stronger  
the flessh is / the forer may the soule be / And ouer al thys  
strength of the body & worldly hardynes causeth ful ofte many  
men to peryshe and myschaunce / Eke for to pryde hym of hys  
gentrye / it is ful greet folye / For oft tyme the gentrye of the  
body begynneth of the gentrye of the soule / And eke he be alle  
of one fader and of one moder / And al he ben of one nature  
cotyn and corrupt both ryche and poure / For soth a maner gens  
trye is for to preysse that apperlyeth mannes courage wyth vertu  
es or moralites and makyth hym a Cryscen chylde / For trusteth  
wel that what man that synne hath ouer masteryde is very churl  
to synne / Now ben there thre general thynges of gentylnes as  
eschewyng of vyces or rebuldrye And seruage of synne in  
word and werke in countenaunce And vsyng vertu as curtesy  
clennesse and to be lyberalle that is to saye large by mesure / For  
that that passyth mesure is folye and synne / Another is that he  
remembre hym of the bounte that he of other folk hath receyvyd

Another is to be benygne ouer his subgette / wherfore as  
sayth Senek / There is no thyng more couenable to man of high  
estate than debonayre / and these flyes that men cleyn kee whan  
they make her kynge / they chesen one that hath non prycke wher  
wyth he may styng / Another is a man to haue a noble herte  
and a diligent tatterer to hys vertuous thynges / Certes also  
who that prydeth in the goodes of fortune he is ful like a greet  
fole / For somtyme a man is a ful greet man by the morowe  
that is a wretche or a captif or it be nyght / And somtyme delys  
tes of mā ben cause of greuous maladye thorough which he dyeth  
Certes the commendacion of the peple is somtyme ful fals and  
ful brotyl for to truste This day they preysse / to morowe they  
blame / godd boote / Eke desyre to haue comendacion of the peple  
hath causyd deth to many a man / Now certes a man to pryde  
hym in the goodes of grace is eke an outrageous fye for the  
restes of grace that shold haue turned hym to goodnes and to

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medecyne turnyth to venym and to confusion / as sayth saynt Gre-  
gore / Now sith that so is that ye haue vnderstonde what is pride  
and whiche be the spyres of hit / And how mennys pride sour-  
deth and springyth / Now shal ye vnderstonde whiche is the re-  
medye agaynst pryde / And that is humylite or mekenes / That  
is a vertu thurgh whiche man hath very knowleche of hym self  
and holdeth of hym self no deynce ne no pryde as in regarde of  
his desertes consideringe euer his freld / Now ben there thre  
maners of humylite / as humylite in herte / and another in the  
mouth / And the thyrde in werkes / The humylite in herte is in  
four maners that is when a man holdeth hym self as nought  
worth before god of hym / Another is when he despyseth none  
other man / The thyrde is / that he reckyth not though men holde  
hym nought / The fourth is when he is not sorowful of his humilia-  
cion / Also the humyliacon of mouth is in four thynges / In  
attemptat speche / And when he knoweth with his owen mouth  
that he is such as he thynketh that he is in his herte / Another  
when he prayseth the debonayre of another man / And also no  
thyng therof amensith / Humylite eke in werkes is in four ma-  
ners / The first is when he put men before hym / The secound is to  
chese the lowest place / The thyrde is gladly to assente to good  
counseyll / The fourth is gladly to stonde in obediens of his su-  
uerayn or of hym that is higher in degre / Certes that is a greet  
werk of humylite /

### Sequitur de Inuidia

**H**er pryde whyl I speke of the foule synne of enuye /  
whiche that is as by the word of the philosophre sorow  
of other mennys prouffyt / And after the word of  
seynt Austyn it is sorow of other mennys wele and  
joye of other mennys harm / This foule synne is platly agens  
the holy ghoost / Al be it so that euery synne is agens the holy  
ghoost / yet for as much as hounte apperteyneth to the holy ghoost  
properly / And enuye cometh properly of malice / Therefore it is  
properly agens the hounte of the holy ghoost / Now hath malice  
two spyres that is to saye hardynes of herte and wyckednes / or

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ekys the flessh of man is so blynde that he considereth not that he is in synne / whiche is the hardynes of the deupl / That other sppe of enuye is whan a man warrynth ayenst trowth whan that he woost that it is trowth / And eke whan that he warrynth the grax that god hath geue to his neyghbour / And al thys is enuye / waxes than is enuye the werst synne that is / For sothly al other synnes he som tyme ayenst one special vertu / But waxes enuye is ayenst al maner vertues and alle goodnes / For it is sorp of al bounte of his neyghbours / And in thys maner it is dyuerse from al synnes / For Vnnethe is there ony synne that it ne hath som delyte in hym self saue only enuye that euer hath in hym self anguysshe and sorolbe / The sppe of enuye ben thys / There is first sorolbe of other mennys goodnes / And of her prosperyte ought to be kyndly mater of Joye / Thenne is enuye a synne ayenst kynde / The seconde spie of enuye is ioye of other mennys harme / Of this second sppe cometh lachtyng or detraction that hath thys spie as thus / Som men preys her neyghbour by wicked entente / For he maketh allway a wicked knotte at the last ende allway he maketh a but that is signe of more blame than worth is alle the preysyng / The second spie is that a man be good and doo and saye a thyng to good entente / The lachiter wyl torne al the goodnes vp so down to his shrewd entente / The thyd is to amenuse the bounte of his neyghbour / The fourth spie of lachtyng is this that yf men speke goodnes of a man the lachiter wyl saye / perhay yet is such a man better than he / in dyspreysyng of hym that men prayse / The fythe is to consente gladly to herkne the harme that men speken of other folke / this synne is ful grette and ay encreasith after the wicked entente of the lachiter / After lachtyng comyth grutchyng or murmurance And somtyme it spryngeth of Impacience ayenst god & somtyme ayenst man / Ayenst god is whan a man grutchith agaynst the payne of helles / or ayenst pouerte or losse of catel or ayenst rapyn or tempest / or ellis grutcheth that shrewdes haue prosperite / or ekys that good men haue aduersite / And al these thynges shold men suffer paciently / For they comen by the rightful Jugement and ordynaunce of god / Somme tyme cometh grutchyng of auarice as Judas grutchyd ayenst Magdalene whan she anoynted the fete of our lord Jhesu crist with her precous oynement / This maner

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of murmur is such as when men grutchen of goodnes / of that men hem self doon / or that other folke doon of hir owen catel / Somtyme comyth murmur of pryde as when Symon the pharise grutchyd agens magdaleyn when she approchid to Ihesu Cryste And wept at his feet for hir synnes / And somtyme it sourdeth of enuye when men discoueren a mannes harm that was pryncer or letyth hym on honde thyng that is sale / Murmur is eke ofte amonge seruauntes when hir souerayns hydden hem doo leful thynges / And for as much as they dar not openly wythesay the commaundment of hir mayster / yet wyl they say harme and grutch and murmur pryncerly for very dyspyte / Whiche wordes men clepe the deuyls pater noster / though so be the deuyll had neuer pater noster / but that folke geue such a name / somtyme it cometh of pre or of pryue hate that noryssheth rancour in herte as after I shal declare / Thenne cometh eke bitternes of herte Through whiche bitternes every good dede of his neyghbour seemeth to hym bytter and vnswete / Than comyth dyscorde that vniyndeth alle maner of frendshyp / Thenne comyth scornynge of his neyghbour al doo he neuer so wel / thenne cometh accusynge as when men seken occasion to annoye his neyghbour / whiche that is like the craft of the deuyll that wyrteth both nyght and day to accusen vs alle / Thenne cometh malignyte throughte such a man noyeth his neyghbour pryncerly yf he may / And yf he nought may algate his wycked wyl shal not wante as for to brinne his hous pryncerly or empoysen hym or flece his bestes and sembla ble thynges / Now wyl I speke of the remedye of this foul synne of enuye / The first is the loue of god pryncerly & buyng of hym self and of his neyghbour / For sothly that one may not be wythout that other / And crise wyl in the name of thy neyghbour that thou shalt vnderstonde thy broder / For artre all we haue one fader flesshly and one moder that is to saye / Adam and Eue / And eke one fader spirytuel / that is to saye god of heuen / Thy neyghbour art thou holde for to loue and wyl hym alle goodnes / And therfore sayth god / loue thy neyghbour as thy self that is to saye to lyf and to soule and saluacion / And more ouer thou shalt loue hym in worde and keryngne chere and monysshynge and charytyng in a word to comforte hym & praye for hym wyth alle thy lere / And in dede thou shalt loue hym

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in such wyse that thou shalt doo to hym in charite as thou woldest were don to thyne owen persone / And therfore thou shalt doo to hym no damage in wycked word ne harme in his body ne in his catel ne in his soule by entysyng of wycked ensauple / Thou shalt not desire his Wyf ne none of his thynges / Vnderstande eke that in the name of thy neyghbour is comprehendyd his enemye / Certes a man shal loue his enemye for the comaundment of god / And sothly thy frende shalle thou loue in god / I say thy enemye shalle thou loue for goddys sake by his comaundment / For it were reson a man shold hate his enemye / For soth god wil not receyue vs to his loue that ten his enemyes A yense thre maner wronges that his enemye doth to hym he shall do thre thynges as thus / ayenst hate and rancour of herte he shal loue hym in herte / ayenst chydynge and wycked wordes he shall praye for his enemye / Ayenst the wicked dede of hys enemye he shal do hym bounte / For Crist sayth loueth your enemyes and prayeth for hem that spekketh you harme and eke for hem that you chasen and pursuen and do bounte to hem that you haten / So thus commaundeth vs our lord Ihesu Crist to do to our enemyes For soth nature dryueth vs to loue our frendes / And persey our enemyes haue more nede to loue than our frendes / And they that more nede haue / Certes to hem shal we doo goodnes / and certes in that dede haue remembraunce of the loue of Ihesu Crist that dyed for his enemyes / And for as muche as that loue is the more gretuous to perfourme / so muche is more gret the meryte / And therfore the buyng of our enemye hath confounded the kynem of the deupl / For right as the deupl is scowfited by humylite / Right so is he wounded to the deth by the loue of our enemye / Certes than is loue medecyne that chaseth out the kynem of enuye fro mannyng herte /

Sequitur de Ira

**F**or Enuye wyl I declare of the synne of Ire / For soth he that hath enuye vpon his neyghbour / Anon comynly wyl fynde hym mater of wrath in word or in dede / Ayenst hym to whom he hath enuye for sothly he that is

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proude or enuyous is lightly wroth / This synne of ire after  
dyscrepyng of saynt Austyn is wycked wyll to be auengyd by  
worde or by dede / Ire after the phylosophre is the feruent blood  
of man y quykend in his herte / thurgh which he wyll harme  
to hym that he hateth / For certes the herte of man by enchaufyng  
and meynyng of his blood wepyth so troubled that he is out of  
al iugement of resons / But ye shul vnderstonde that ire is in  
two maners / Oon of hem is good and that other is wycked /  
The good ire is by iehesux of goodnes thurgh the which a man  
is wroth with wickednes & agayn wickednes / & therfore saith the  
wise man that ire is better than playe / this ire is with deboneyrte  
& it is wroth wythout bytternes not wroth agaynste the man / but  
wroth wyth the mysdede of the man as sayth the prephete / Irasci  
mini et nolite peccare / Now vnderstonde that wicked ire is in  
maners that is to say sodeyn ire or faste ire wythout awysment  
and consentyng of his reson / The meynyng and the sense of thys  
is that reson of a man ne consentith not to that sodeyn ire / And  
than is hit venyal / Another ire is that is ful wycked that cometh  
of felonye of herte awysed and cast before wyth wycked  
wyll to doo vengeance / & therto his reson consentith & sothly thys  
is dedely synne / This ire is so dyspleysaunt to god that it  
troublith his hous and chasith the holy ghoost out of mannes  
soule and put in hym the sekenees of the deuyll and kempeth the  
man fro god that is his rightful lord / This ire is a ful grete  
pleysaunce to the deuyll for it is the deuyllis furneyse that he en  
chaunsieth with the fire of helle / For certes as fyre is more mygh  
ty to destroye earthly thynges than another element / Right so ire  
is myghty to destroye al spiritual thynges Loke how that fyre of  
smale gledys that be almost dede vnder ashen wyll quykene ayen  
whan they be touchyd wyth brymstone / right so ire wyll euermore  
quykene agayn whan it is touchid with pride that is couerid in  
mannes herte / For certes pride may not come out of no thyng but  
yf hit were first in the same thyng naturally as fire is dalyen  
out of felyntis with steel / right so is pride a matter of ire / right as  
rancour is nourisshid and kepar therof / There is a maner tree as  
saith saynt Isodore / That whan men make fire of that tre and co  
uer the colys of hit wyth ashen / Sothly the fyre therof wol laste  
of a yere or more / And right so farith it by rancour / whan he is

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ones conceived in the hertes of somme men / Certes it Wyl laste  
peraventure from one ester day Tyl an other or more / But certes  
that man is ful ferre from the mercy of god: al that whyle /  
In this forsayd deuyles forneys they forgen thre shrewys /  
Pryde than bblweth and encreasith the fyre by chydynge and byes  
kyd: wordes / Thenne stondeth enuye and holdeth the yron upon  
the hertes of men / Wyth a payre of long tonges with longe ran-  
cour / And thenne stont the synne of contynuel scryf and chere  
and letith and forgyth the bylains reprovynge / Certes this  
curseyd synne annoyeth both the man hym self and eke his neygh-  
bour / For sothly almost al the harm that ony man doth to his  
neyghbour cometh of wrath / For certes outrageous wrath doth  
al that euer the deuyll commaundeth hym / For he spareth neyther  
for Crist ne his swete moder in his outrageous anger and yet  
but spekyth and blaundyth his neyghbour / this is a curseyd  
lyf whiche lyf shold be donayr and spiriuel that shold kepe  
his soule / Certes this ire or wrath bynnyeth eke goddys due  
fordshyp and that is manys soule and the loue of his neygh-  
bours / hit scryueth allway eke ayenst trouthe / hit reueth hym  
the quyet of his herte and subuertith his soule / Of ire comen  
thysc seynkyng engendrures / First hate that is olde wrath rene-  
lyd / through whiche a man forsaketh his owen frend that he hath  
louyd so long / & thenne cometh berre and euery maner of wrong  
that a man doth to his neyghbour in body or in catel / Of thys  
curseyd synne of ire cometh eke manslaughtre / And vnderstonde  
wel that manslaughtre is in dyuerse wyse / Somme maner of  
manslaughtre is spiriuel / And Somme bodyly / Spiriuel mans-  
slaughtre is in fyve thynges / First by hate as sayth seynt John  
he that hateth his broder is an homycide / Manslaughtre is eke by  
kychtyng of whiche kychtyours sayth Salamon that they shue  
t wo swerdys with whiche they sle hir neyghbours / For sothly  
as wicked it is to kenne his good name as his lyf / homycide  
is eke in yeuyng of wycked counceyl by fraude / or for to geue  
counceyl for to aryse wrongful customes and talagys of  
whiche speke Salamon / Upon torpynge and bere hungry ten-  
lykenyd to cruel lordes / In wythholdynge or abredgynge of  
the hyre or wages of youre folke / For whiche the wise man saith  
frede is hym that almost dreteth for hungry / For sothly

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But yf thou fede hym thou sleepest hym / And al thys ben dedely syn-  
nys / Wodely manslaughter is whan thou sleepest hym wyth thy  
tunge / Another maner is whan thou commaundest to sle a man  
or elles yeuest hym counceyl to sle a man Manslaughter in dede  
is in four maners / That one is by lawe / right as a Justyce  
dampneth hym that is culpable to the deth / but lette the Justyce  
be ware that he doo it rightfully and that he doo it not for desyte  
to spyke blood but for keepyng of rightwysnes / Another homy-  
cyde is don for necessity as whan a man sleeth another his defen-  
daunt and that he ne may otherwys escape fro his owen deth /  
But certeyn and he may escape wythout slaughter of his aduer-  
sary and sleeth hym he doth synne / And he shal be penaunce  
as for dedely synne / Eke yf a man by cas or aventure sette on  
another or cast a stoon wyth which he sleeth a man it is homycyde  
Eke yf a woman by negligenc over lyeth her chyld in slepyng  
It is homycyde and dedely synne / Eke whan a man destroyeth  
concepcion of a chyld or makyth a woman barren by drynkes of  
venymous herbes thurgh whiche she may not concyue / Or sleeth  
her chyld by drynkes / or elles putteth certeyn material  
thyng in her secreete place to sle her chyld / Or elles doth unkynde  
synne / by whiche man or woman shedyth his nature in place  
there as a chyld may not be concyued / Or elles yf a woman  
haue concyued and hurte her self and sleeth her chyld /  
Yet is it homycyde what saye we eke of women that murder her  
chyldren for drede of worldly shame / Certes it is eke an  
horrible homycyde / Eke yf a man approche to a woman by desire  
of lechery thurgh which the chyld is perished elles smyteth a  
woman betyngly by whiche her chyld is slayn / Alle thys  
ben homycydes and dedely horrible synnys / Yet comyn of yre  
many moo synnes as in worde in thought in dede as wel as he  
that curseth vpon god or blasphemeth god of whiche he is  
hym self gilty or despyseth god and alle his knyghtes as doon  
thys cursyd knaues in dyuerse contrees /  
Thys cursyd synne do they whan they felen in her herte ful  
wickedly of god and his knyghtes / Also whan they trete  
unworthely the sacrament of the altare / Thys synne is so  
gret / that vnnethe may it be reled but that the mercy of god  
asseth his knyghtes / which mercy is grete and benygne /

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There cometh also of yre a tery anger whan a man is sharply as  
moneffed in his thurst to forelete his synne/ Than wil he be angry  
and answere okirly & angerly to defende or excusyn his synne /  
by vntedfastnes of his flessch / or ellys he dyd hit for to holde  
company with his felalbes / or ellis he sayth / the fende entised hym  
or ellis he dyd hit for his yowth / or ellys his complexyon is so  
courageous that he may not forelete / ellys it is destyne as he sayth  
vnto a certeyn age / or ellis he saith it comyth hym of gentilnes of  
his auntyres and semblable thynges / Al thise maner of folke  
so whappyn hem in her synnes that they wyl not delpuer hem self /  
For sothly no wyght that excusith hym wylfully of his synne /  
may be delpuerd of his synne / til he mekely beknowith his synne  
After theinne cometh sweryng that is expres ayenst the commaundment  
of god and thys befallith of anger and of yre / God  
sayth thou shalt not take the name of thy lord in vayne / Also  
our lord Ihesu crist sayth by the wordes of saynt mattheu / ne wyl  
ye to sweere in al maner / neyther by heuen for hit is goddes throne  
neyther by erthe for it is the benche of his feet / ne by Iherusalem  
for it is the cyte of a grete kyng / ne by thyng hede / for thou ne  
mayst make an her whyte ne black / but your othe shal be yey  
nay / nay / And what that is more euyl / thus sayth crist / For  
cristes sake swere ye not so synfully in dysmembryng of Crist /  
by soule / herte / bones / and body / For ye thynke that the  
curspyd Iellys dysmembryd hym not ynough but ye dysmembere  
hym more / And yf so be that lalbe compelle yow to swere theinne  
relle yow after the lalbe of god in your sweryng / As sayth  
seynt Iherome the fourth chapytre / Thou shalt kepe thre condycions  
/ Thou shalt swere in trouthe / in dome and in rightwisnes  
This is to say thou shalt swere soth / for euery lesyng is ayenst  
crist / for Crist is very trouthe / And thynke wel thys that euery  
grete swerer not compellyd lawfully to sweere / the plague of vengeaunce  
shal be not parte from his holles whyles he dyth suche vn  
lawful sweryng / Thow shalt eke swere in dome whanne thou  
art compellyd by thy domes man to wytnesse the trouthe / Eke  
thou shalt not sweere for enuye / for fauour / for mede but for right  
wysnes for declarng of trouthe to the worship of god / hel &  
pyng of thyn euen cristen / & therfore euery ma that taketh goddes  
name in ydele or falsly swerith with his mouth / or ellis taketh on

## The Tale of the Parson

hym the name of crist to be callyd a cristen man and kueth ayenst  
cristen lypung & his techyng / al they take goddis name in ydle  
Toke eke what saith saynt petre actuū quarto / there is none o<sup>r</sup>  
ther name vnder heuen geuen to man in which they moot be sau<sup>ed</sup>  
That is to say but in the name of Jhu Crist / Take kepe eke hold  
that precious name of Jhu crist as saith seynt paul at philipenses  
In nomine Jhu & c / That in the name of Jhesu every kynde of he-  
uently creature or erthly or of lakke shold holben / For it is so high  
and so worshipful that the cursid fende in lakke shold tremble for  
to here it named / Than semeth it that men that sware so horrybly  
his blessyd name that they despyse it more boldly than dyd the  
cursid jelles that tremleden whan they herde his name / Now  
certes sith that sweryng but it be doo al lawfully is so holy de-  
fended muche worse is for to swere falsely and eke needles / What  
saye we eke of them that deliten them in sweryng and holde it a  
gentyle or manly dede to swere grete othis / and what of hem that  
of very rage needesse not to swere grete othes and al the cause not  
worthy a stralbe / Certes this is horryble synne / Sweryng also  
withouth awysment is eke synne / But late be goo now to that  
cursid and horryble sweryng of adiuration & coniuration as doon  
thysse fals enchauntours & nygromancers in busynes ful of water  
Or in a bryght swerd / In a cercle or in a fyre / or in a sholdre  
boon of a sheep I can not saye but they doo cursydly and damp-  
nably ayenst Crist and alle the feyth of holy chyrche / What saye  
ye by them that byleuen in dym naphis as by flight or by noyse  
of byrds and of bestes or by sort / by nygromancie / by dreemes  
By chyrchying of donis by gna wyng of rattis or crackyng of  
houses & such maner of wretchednes / certes al this thyng is defen-  
ded of god & eke holy chyrche / for which they be cursid til they com  
to amendement / that on such filthe sette theyr felue / Charms  
for woundys & maladies of men or of bestes / yf they take any  
effect / it may be perauenture that god suffreth it / for men shold  
gyue the more feyth and reuerence to his name / Now wyl I  
speke of lesynges whiche generally is fals signyfication of word  
with entent to dysceue his euen cristen / Som lesyng there is of  
whiche cometh none auantage to no wight / And som lesyng wor-  
neth to the esc & prouffyt of a man and to damage of another  
man / Another lesyng for to saue his lyf or catel / Another lesyng

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compyth of deylte / They Wyl forge a longe tale and pynnt it with  
al circumstauncis wherof al the grounde is false / Somme lesyng  
compyth for he wyl susteyne his worde / And somme lesyng cometh  
of rechelesnes wythouten awsement and semblable thynges /  
Eke be now to luche the wyse of flaterye / Whiche comyth not  
gladly but for drede or for couetyse / Flaterye is generally  
wryngful pypseyng / Flaterers ben the duplis norices that no  
assayeth his chyldren wyth the mylke of wylengery / For soth sayth  
Salamon that flaterye is worse than detraction / For somtyme  
detraction makyth an haunteyn man be the more humble for he  
dredeth detraction / But certeyn flaterye maketh a man to en  
haunce his herte and his countenaunce / Flaterers ben the de  
uples enchauntours for they maken a man to benen hym self  
be like / that he is not like / They be like Judas that betrayed  
god / And thise flaterers betraye a man to selle hym to his ene  
mye that is the deupl / Flaterers ben the dupples chapeleynes  
that syngen euer places / I reken flaterye in vias of ire / For  
ofte tyme yf a man be wroth wyth another / Thenne Wyl he fla  
terre somme wyght to susteyne hym in his quarrelle / Speke we  
now of such cursyng as comyth out of proues hertes / Malysoun  
may be sayd generally euery maner polber of harm / such cursyng  
betweth a man the regne of god / As sayth saynt paul / And  
ofte such cursyng wryngfully retorneth ayen to hym that cursyth  
As a byrde retorneth agayn to hys olben neste / And ouer alle  
thyng men ought to schelbe to curse her chyldren and to yeue to  
the deupl her engendrure as ferforth as in hem is / Certes it is  
a grete perpl and a grete synne / Eke be thenne speke of chidynge  
and reprevynge whiche ben grete woundes in mannes herte / For  
certes vnnethe may a man be playnly accorded wyth hym that he  
hath openly reupled / reprovod and disclaundred this is a ful  
gryssy synne / As Crist sayth in the gospel / And take ye kepe  
now that he that reproveth his neyghbour by somme harme or by  
somme peyn that he hath in his body / as mesil / crokyd / barbot /  
or by somme signe that he doth / Now yf he reproveth hym by harm  
of peyne / thenne retorneth the reprov to Ihesu cryst / For peyne  
is sent by the right wys sonde of god and by his suffraunce /  
be it meselye or mayme or maladye / And yf he reprove hym  
vacharyntably of synne / thou hoour / thou dronkelebe barbot

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and so forth thenne apperkyneþ it to triouþing of the deupl that  
euer hath ioye that men doen synne / And certis chydng may  
not come but of vyleynous herte / For after houndaunce of the  
herte speleth the mouth ful of it / And ye shul vnderstande whan  
ony man chastyseth another that he beliaar fro chydng or vper  
upng / For treibly but he be lyaar he may ful lightly quench  
the fyre of angur and of wrath whiche that he shal not quench /  
And prauenture sleeth hym that he myght chastyse wyth lenng  
nyte / For as sayth Salamon / The amiable tongue is the tre  
of lyf / that is to saye of lyf spirituel / And a dysclaus tongue  
sleeth the spirites of hym that is reprovyn / Lo what sayth saynt  
Austyn / There is no thyng like the deupls chylde as he that  
oft chydeth / Seynt Paule sayth also / I seruants of god behoue  
not to chyd / And hold that chydng is a vileyns thyng be  
twyx alle maner folke / yet is hit certis most vconuenable  
betwyx a man and his wyf / For there is neuer rest / And  
therfore sayth Salamon / An hous that is vconuerd in rayn &  
drownyng / and a chydng wyf be like / a man that is in a drow  
nyng hous in many places / though he eschewe the drownyng in  
one place / hit drownyth on hym in another place / So farith it  
by a chydng wyf but she chyd hym in one place she wyf chyd  
hym in another place / And therfore better is a moral bred wyth  
ioye / than an hous ful of dysples wyth chydng / Lo what sa  
lomon and saynt Paule sayn / O ye women be ye subgette to  
your husbandys as behoueth in god / And ye men loue your  
wyues / Afterward speke we of scornng whiche is a vyle  
ked synne and namely whan he scorneth a man by his good wer  
kys / For certis such scornys faren lyke the fouls tode that may  
not endure to smelle the swete sauour of the vyne whan it flos  
sith / These scornys ben partynng scholles wyth the deupl for  
they haue ioye whan the deupl vynneth and for whan he lesyth  
They ben aduersaries to ihesu crist / For they haten that he buyeth  
that is to saye sauacion of soules / Speke we now of the wicked  
counceyl / For he that wicked counceyl geueth is a treypour /  
For he dysceyueth hym that trusteth in hym / But netheles yet  
is wycked counceyl first apenset hym self / For as sayth the  
wyse man / Every fals luyng hath his propre in hym self /  
For he that wyf anoye another man anoyeth first hym self / And

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men shal vnderstonde that a man shal not take his counceyl of  
falle folke ne of angry folke or greuous folke ne of folke that  
louen specially her olben prouffyt / ne to muche worldly folke &  
namely in counceyllyng of foolis / Nold comyth the synne of hem  
that maken discorde among folk / whiche is a synne that Cryst  
hateth vterly / And no wonder is / for he dyed for to make  
conorde / And more shame don they to cryst than dyd they that  
hym crucified / For god loueth better that frendshyp be amonge  
folke than he dyde his olben body whiche he gaf for vnyte / Elsefor  
be they likenyd to the deuyll that euer is aboute to make dyscorde  
Nold comyth the synne of double tongue for such as speke fayr  
beforn men & wickedly behynde / or elles they make semblaunt as  
though they speken of good entencion / or elles in game and  
pleye / And they speken of wicked entente / Nold comyth the  
weyppng of counceyl / thurgh whiche man is defamed / vnnethis  
may he restore the damage / Nold comyth manace that is an open  
folye / For he that openly menaceth he threatneth more thenne he  
may ouercome ful oft tyme / Nold comen yde wordys that be  
wthout prouffyt of hym that speke the wordes and eke of  
hym that herknyth the wordes / Or elles yde wordes ben tho that  
ben nedeles or wthout entente of naturel prouffyt / And al be  
hit that yde wordes be somtyme vnpayal synne / yet shal men  
doubte hem / For we shal proue rekenyng of hem before god /  
Nold comyth jangelynge that may not come wthout synne as  
sayth Salamon / It is a signe of apert folye / And therefore  
a philosophre sayde whan a man axed hym how men shold plesse  
And he answered doo many good werkis and speke felve jan  
gelynges / After this cometh the synne of jaxers that been the  
deuylls appes / For they make folke to laughe at her jaxerys  
as folke doon at galles of an ape / Such jaxes defendeth saynt  
poule / For he hold that vertuous wordes and holy comforten hem  
that traueylen in the seruyce of Cryst / Ryght so comforten the  
vyleyns wordes and the knackys of jaxers hem that traueylen  
in the seruyce of the deuyll / Alle thys ben the synnes of the tunge  
that comyn of ire & of othe synnes / The remedy agens ire  
is a vertu that cleped is mansuetude that is deboneyte / and eke  
another vertu that men clepen patience / Saynt Jerome sayth  
that of debonayte that it doth harme to no wyght ne sayth none

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harm that men hym doo ne sayn ne chaungeth not agens<sup>t</sup> reſon /  
This Vertu cometh ſomtyme of nature / For as ſayth the philoſo-  
pher a man is a quip<sup>t</sup> thyng by nature deſonare and turtable by  
goodnes / But when deſonare is enformed of grace it is the  
more worthy / Pacience is another remedye agens<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> and is a  
Vertu that men ſuffre ſweetly every mannes goodnes / and is not  
wroth for noſe harme that is doon to hym / The philoſopher ſaith  
that pacience is that Vertu that ſuffreth deſonarely al the outrage  
of aduerſite / and every wicked word / This Vertu maketh a  
man like to god and maketh hym his olben de<sup>r</sup> chylde / as ſaith  
crist thys Vertu diſcomfieth thyn enemye / And therfore ſayth the  
Wiſe man yf thou wolt bynquyſſe thyn enemye ſee that thou be  
paciente / Suffraunce is another Vertu agens<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> / And that is  
when he ſuffreth ſweetly alle anoyauce and the wronges that  
men doo a man outward / Thou ſhalt vnderſtonde that a man  
ſuffreth four maner of greuaunces in outward thynges / Agens<sup>t</sup>  
whiche foure he muſt haue foure maner of pacience / The firſt  
greuaunce is wicked wordes / that greuaunce ſuffred Ieſu Crist  
wythout grutchyng be<sup>t</sup> paciently when the Iewes deſpised hym  
and reprov<sup>d</sup> hym ful ofte / Suffre thou therfore paciently /  
for the wyſe man ſaith yf thou ſerue wyth a fool / yf the fool be  
wroth or though he laughe / Algate thou ſhalt haue no reſte /  
That other greuaunce outward is to haue damage of thy catel /  
There agens<sup>t</sup> ſuffred crist ful paciently when he deſpoiled was  
of al that euer he had in thys lyf and that nas but clothys /  
The thyrde greuaunce is to a man to haue greuaunce in his body  
That ſuffred crist ful paciently in all his paſſyon / The fourth gre-  
uaunce is in outrageous labour in werkys / Wherefore I ſay that  
folke that maken her ſeruauntes to trauep<sup>e</sup>le to greuouſly out of  
tyme as in holy dayes / Sothly they doo grete synne / here agens<sup>t</sup>  
ſuffred crist ful paciently and taught vs pacience when he ſate  
vpon his bleſſyd ſholdres the croſſe vpon whiche he ſhold<sup>d</sup> ſuffre  
deſpytous de<sup>t</sup>h / here may men lerne to be pacient / For crists not  
only criſten men be pacient for the loue of Ieſu crist & for guerdon  
of the blaſſe of heuen and of the bleſſyd lyf that is perdurable /  
But crists the olde paynemes that neuer were criſtenyd comen  
dyd and vſyd the Vertu of pacience / A philoſophre vpon a tyme  
that wolde haue been his diſaple for his grete treſpaas / For

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Whiche he was gretefully ameyndyd and brought a yerde to scourge  
the chylde / And when the chylde sawe the yerde he sayd to his  
master / What wyl ye doo / I wyl bete the quod the master  
for thy correction / For soth quod the chylde ye ought first correcte  
your self that hath lost your patience for the gylt of a chylde /  
For soth sayd the master al wepyng thou seyst soth haue thou  
the yerde my dere sone and correct me for myn. Impatience / Of  
patience comyth obedience thurgh whiche a man is obedient to  
Christ and to alle hym to whiche he ought to be obedient in crist /  
And vnderstande wel that obedience is parfycht when men doo  
gladly and hastily wpyth good herte entirely al that he shold do  
Obedience generally is to perfourme the doctryne of god and to  
his souerayns to whiche hym ought to be obeyssaunt in alle  
reghthysnes /

### Sequitur de Acardia /

**A**fter the synne of wrath I wyl speke of the synne of  
acardy or slooth / For enure blyndeth the herte of man  
And tre troubleth a man / And acardy maketh hym  
leuy thoughtfull and vrbalbe / Enure and tre maken  
bitternes in herte / Whiche bytternes is moder of acardy and be-  
nymeth hym the loue of alle goodnes / the nne is acardy the angre  
of a treble herte / And saynt Austyn sayth It is anoye of good-  
nes and annoye of harme / Certes thys is a dampnable synne /  
For it doth Wrong to Ihesu crist in as muche as he benymeth the  
seruyce that men ought to doo to Ihesu crist wpyth al dyligence /  
As sayth Salamon / But acardy doth none suche dyligence /  
He doth alle wpyth annoye and vrbalnes Slaknes / exaustacion  
dulnesse and vnlyste / For whiche the book sayth acurseyd be he  
that doth the seruyce of god necligently / thenne is acardy enes-  
mye to euery estate of man / For the estate of man is in thre ma-  
ners / Epyther it is estate of Innocence as was the state of Adam  
before or that he fyl in to synne in whiche estate he was holde to  
worke as in seerpyng and adouryng of god / Another estate is  
estate of superfluyte / In whiche estate men be holden to laboure  
in prayyng to god for amendement of her synnes / Another

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estate is in the estate of grace / In which estate is he holden to  
doo werkes of penytence / And certes to alle this thynges is  
acadye enemye and contrary for he bueth no besynes at alle /  
Nolw certes this foule synne of acadye is eke a ful grete enemye  
to the spued of the body / For it hath no purueaunce agens  
temporel neassyte / For it is slouthful and forloggful and  
destroeyth alle goodes temporel by rechelesnes / the fourth thyng  
is that acadye is like him that len in the pygh of helle by cause of  
slouth and of her cruynes / For they that be dampned be so bounde  
that neyther may they doo wel ne thynke wel / Of acadye cometh  
first that a man is anoyed and encomberd to doo any goodnes  
and maketh that god hath abhomy nation of such acadye as  
sayth saynt John / Nolw comyth slouth that wyl suffre no hard-  
nes ne no penaunce / For soth slouth is so despayte and so tendre  
as sayth Salamon that he wyl suffre non hardnes ne penaunce  
therefore he shendeth al that he doth / Apense thys to a synne  
of acadye or slouth shold men exerceise him to doo good werkes  
and manly and vertuously catchen courage wel to doo / Thynkyng  
that our lord Ihesu cryst quyteth euery good dede be it neuer so  
littel vsage of it is a grete thyng / For it maketh as sayth saynt  
Bernard the laborer to haue stronge armys and hard synelvs  
And slouth maketh him feble and tendre / Than comyth drede  
for to begynne to werke any good werkes / For certes he that  
is enclyned to synne hym thynketh it is to grete an empyse for  
to undertake to doo werkes of goodnes as sayth saynt gregore /  
Nolw comyth wanhope that is dyspayr of the mercy of god that  
comyth somtyme of to myght outrageous sorow and somtyme of  
myght drede ymagynyng that he hath doo so muche that it wolde  
not auayle hym though he wolde repente hym and doe good /  
thruugh which dyspayr or drede / He aboundeth his herte to euery  
maner synne As sayth saynt Austyn / which that is dampnable  
yf it contynue to hys ende / hit is cleped synnyng in the holy  
ghost / This horryble synne is so perpyous that he that is dyspey-  
red that there is no felonye ne no synne that he doubteth for to do  
as shelbeu wel by Judas / Certes thenne abouen alle is thys  
synne most dyspleysant and most aduersary to Cryst / Certes he  
that dyspeyeth is lyke the colbard champion restraunt and ne-  
des dyspeyeth / For certes the mercy of god is euer redy to

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the penitent / hit is aboue al his werkys / Alas can not a man  
kethynke hym on the gospel of Saynt luke / Luce xij / where as  
cryst saith that as wel shalke there be more joye in heuyn vpon a  
synful man that doth penytence than vpon nyenty and y right  
ful men that nedyn no penytence / like ferther in the gospel the  
ioye and the festys of the good man that had lost his sone / whan  
his sone wyth repentaunce was returned to his fader / Can they  
not remembre like as sayth saynt luke xviij / How that the theef  
that was hanged besyde Ihesu / Sayde lord remembre on me  
whan thou comest to thy regne / forsoth sayde crist / this day shalt  
thou be wyth me in paradys / Certes there is none so forgyfte  
synne of man that it ne may in his lyf be destroyed by penytence  
thruogh vertu of the passyon of crist / Alas what nedeth man thene  
to be dyspayred sithen his mercy is so redy / aske and haue /  
Thenne cometh sompnolence that is sluggys slumbryng whiche  
makyth a man to be leuy and dul in body and in soule / And  
this synne cometh of slooth / And certes the tyme as by wyse of  
reson men shold not slepe that is by the morow but yf it were  
cause resonable / For soch in the morow is most couenable a man  
to saye his prayres and for to thynke on god and to honoure  
god and to geue almes to the poure that first comen in the name  
of cryst / So what Salamon sayth / Whoso so wyll by the morow  
a wake to seke me he shal fynde me / Thenne cometh negligence or  
recklesnes that rekyth of no thyng / And how that ignorauce  
is moder of alle harme / Certes negligence is the nocce / negly  
gence doth no force whan he shal doo a thyng whether he do it wel  
or badly / Of the remedye of thysse thre synnes as sayth the wyse  
man that he that dredeh god sparieth not to doo that hym ought  
to doo / And he that louyth god wyll doo dyligence to please god  
by his werkys and haounden hym self wyth al his myght wel  
for to doo / Thenne comyth ydolene that is the pater of alle syn /  
my s an ydle man is like to a place that hath no walles the deuyll  
may entre on euery syde / Thys ydolene is the thurlok of alle  
vyleyns and wycked thoughts and of alle janglys / trifys &  
al ordure / Certes heuyn is geuen to hem that wyll labour and  
not to ydle men / Like dauid sayth / That they be not in the  
laboure of men ne they shal not be whypped wyth men that is to  
saye in purgatory / Certes thenne semyth it they shalke be

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tormentid; with the deuyll in helle / But yf they doo penytence /  
Thenne comyth the synne that men clepen tarditas as whan a  
man is so lettid; and; so tardid; or he wyl turne to god; & certis  
that is a grette folye / he is like hym that falleth in the ditch and;  
wyl not aryse / And; this vice cometh of fals hope that he thynk;  
keth that he shalke lyue long but that hope fayleth ful oft /  
Thenne comyth lacke that is he that whan he begynneth any good  
werke anon he wyl forlete hit and; stynt as do they that haue  
ony wyght to gouerne and; take of hym ne kepe / Anon as they  
fynde ony contrarie or ony anoyr / Thys be the nelbe sheepe  
herdes that leten her sheep wytyngly go renne to the wolf that is  
in the brekes and; doo no force of her olben gouernaunce / Of this  
comyth pouerte and; destruction both of spiriuel and; temporel  
thynges / Thenne cometh a maner of coldnes that freteth alle the  
herte of man / Thenne cometh vndeuocon thurgh whyppe a man  
is so bent / As sayth saynt bernard; and; hath such langour in  
his soule that he ne may rede ne sponge in holy chyrche ne here ne  
thynke of deuocion ne traueyle wyth hys honde in no good;  
werke but it is to hym vnsauoure and; alle apassyd; thenne he ys  
yth he sore sluggyshe and; slumbry and; soon wyl he be broth &  
soon is enclyned; to hate and; to enyre / And; thenne comyth the  
synne of Worldly sorowbe / that is clepyd; tristitia / that sleeth a  
man as sayth saynt Paule / For certis such sorowbe werkth  
to the deth of the soule and; of the body also / For theow comyth  
that a man is anoyd; of his olben lyf for such sorowbe shorteth  
the lif of many a man or that his tyme come by waye of fynde  
Apenst thys hurtyble synne of acadye and; the braunchis of the  
same there is a vertue that is called; fortitudo or strengthe that is  
affection thurgh whiche man despyseth alle other thynges noyous  
This vertu is so myghty and; so vygorous that it dar withstande  
myghtily and; braste apenst the salutes of the deuyll & wylsel;  
kepe hym self fro paynes that ben wycked; / For it enhaunsith  
and; enforseth the soule / right as acadye abateth it and; makyth  
it feble / For thys fortitudo may endure with long suffraunce the  
traueyls that ben couenable / This vertu hath many spais  
the first is clepyd; magnanymyte that is to saye grette courage / For  
certis there behoueth grette courage apenst acadye lest that it shal  
blow the soule by the synne of sorowbe or destroye it with wanhope

## The Tale of the Parson

This maketh folke to Undertake hard and greuous thynges by  
her owen wyse wyself and resonably / And for as much as the  
deuyl fighteth ayenst man more by queyntise and by slepyght than  
by strengthe / therefore a man shal withstande hym by wyse by reson  
and by dyscrecion / thenne ben there the vertues of feyth & hope  
in god and in his sayntes to achyue and compass the good  
werkys in whiche he purposith firmly to contynue / Thenne co-  
meth selberte and sikernes / And that is whan a man doth and  
perfourmeth grete werkys of goodnes that he hath begunne /  
And that is the ende why men shold do good werkys / For in  
the complishynge of good werkys lieth the grete guerdon /  
Thenne is the constance that is stablenes of courage / And thys  
shold be in herte by stedfast feyth and in mouth and in berynge  
in chere and in dede / Eke there ben mo special thyngys and re-  
medys ayenst accidye in dyuerse werkys and in consideration of  
the payne of helle & of the ioye of heuen / & in trust of the grace of  
the holy ghoost that wil geue hym myght to pfourme his entent /

### Sequitur de Auaricia

**A**fter Accidye now thyl I speke of auarice and of coue-  
tise of which synne sayth saynt Poule / The rote of al  
synne is couetise / For sothly whan the herte of a man  
is confounded in hit self and troublid and that the  
soule hath lost the comforte of god / Thenne seeketh he an yde so-  
las of worldly thynges / Auarice after dyscription of saynt  
Auseyn is a lichorousnes in herte to haue erthely thyngys /  
Somme other folke say that auarice is for to purchase many  
erthely thynges / and nothyng geue to hem that haue nede / And  
vnderstande wel that auarice is not only in good and in catel /  
but sumtyme in science and in glorie and in euery outrageous  
thynges is auarice and couetise / And the dyfference bytwene  
auarice and couetise is thys / Couetise is for to coueyte suche  
thynges as thou hast not / And auarice is to wythholde and to  
kepe suche thynges as thou hast wythout rightful nede / Sothly  
thys auarice is a synne ful dampnable for al holy writ cursyth

## The Tale of the Parson

hit and? spekyth ayenst hit for it doth wronge to ihesu criste / For  
hit bereueth fro hym the loue that men to hym oiben and? wryneth  
hit backward? ayenst alle reſon and? maketh that the auarous man  
hath more hope in his catel thenne in ihesu criste / And? therfore  
sayth saynt Pankle / that an auarous man hath more hope in hys  
thraldom of ydolatre than in god? / What dyfference is betwix  
an ydolastre and? an auaricious man / Peraventure an ydolastre  
hath but one malmet or tivo / And? the auaricious man hath  
many / For certes euery floren in his cofre is hys malmet /  
And? certes the synne of malwetrye god? fordoeth in the ten  
commaundementis as berith wytnes / Exo / xxviii / Thou shalt  
haue no fals goddis byforn me ne thou shalt make the no graven  
im?ge thyng / But an auaricious man loueth more his tresour for  
god? / and? thurgh thys synne of auarice and? of couetyse cometh  
thysse lord? lordshyppe thorough which men be serued? by talas  
gys customs and? cariages more than for dute or reſon is / Or  
ellys take they of her bond? men ameramentis / which myght  
more reſonably be calld? extorsions than ameramentis / Of  
which ameramentis and? raiſonynge of bond? men / Somme  
lordes ſeywardes ſayn that it is rightful / for as myght as a  
churle hath no temporel thyng that it ne is his lordes as they  
ſayn / But certes thysse lordshyppe don wronge that bereuen her  
bonde folke thynges that they neuer paſ ſem / Auguſtinus de  
Ciuitate dei libro / ix / Sayth that ſoth is that the condycion of  
thraldom and? the fiſt cauſe of thraldom is for synne / Genesis /  
vi / thus may ye ſee that the gyfte deſerueth thraldom and? not na  
ture / Wherefor thysse lordes ſhold? not glory ſem in her lordshyppe  
ſith that by naturel condycion they be not lordes of her thralles /  
but that thraldom come fyrſt by synne / And? fethermore there as  
the ſalbe ſayth that temporel lordes of bonde folke ben the goodes  
of her lordshyppe / Ye that is for to vnderſtande the goodes  
of the emperour to defende ſem in her right but not to robbe ſem ne  
to rauce ſem / And? therfore ſayth Seneca / Thy prudence ſhold?  
lyue benygneſly wyth thy thral / that thou clepeſt thy thral ben  
goddis peple / For humble folke ben criſtes frendes / they be  
contubernyal wyth the lord? / Noli compeſ diſcept betwene mar  
chand and? marchaunt / And? thou ſhalt vnderſtande that mar  
chandſe is in many maners / That one is bodely and? that other

## The Tale Of the Parson

is ghoosely / that one is leefful / And that other is dyshoneste  
and vnleefful / That bodily marchandise that is leefful & honest  
is this / that there as god hath ordeyned that a wyame or a contree  
is suffycient to hym self it is honest and leefful that the habound  
daunce of thys contree may helpe another contree that is more  
nedeful / And therefore there must be marchandise to brynge  
from one contree to another theyr marchaundise / That other  
marchandise is that men haunten fals oþþe wyth fraude treche-  
rye and dyscrite wyth lesynges cursyd and dampnable /  
Spyrituel marchandise is properly symonye / That is entent  
desire to thyng spirituel / That is thyng that apperteyneth to the  
seyntuary of god and to cure of soules / This desyre yf so be  
that a man doo his dyligence to persourne hit / alle be hit that  
his desyre take none effect / Yet is hit to hym a dedely synne /  
And yf he be ordeyd he is irregular / Certes symonye is  
cleppyd of Symon magus that wolde by temporall catel haue  
bought the yeste that god had geuen by the holy ghoost to seynt  
Peter and to the apostles / And therefore vnderstonde ye that  
both he that sellyth and he that byeth thynges spirituel ben cleppd  
symonys / Be it catel be it procuryng or by fleschly prayers  
of his frendys or of spyritual frendys / Fleschly in two  
maners as by hymne and by other frendys / Sothly yf they  
praye for hym that is not able ne worthy / it is symonye yf  
he take the benefyte / And yf he be worthy and able it is none  
That other maner is when men or women prayen for folke  
to auaunte hem only for wycked fleschly affection that they  
haue to the persones / that is foul symonye / But certes in  
seruyce for whyche men geuen thynges spirituel vnto her ser-  
uauntys it must be vnderstonde that the seruyse be honest or elles  
not / And eke that it be wythout bargaynyng and that the persone  
be able / For as sayth Saynt Damas / Alle the synnes of the  
world at regard of thys synne ben as thyng of nought / For  
it is the grettest synne that may be after the synne of lucifer & of  
antycrist / For by thys synne god forlesith the chyrche & the soule  
that he bought with his precious blood by hem that geuen churche  
to hem that be not dygne / For they put in theys that steleyn  
the soules of Ihesu Crist and destroy his patrymonye / By  
suche vndigne preestes and curates haue men the lesse reuerence

## The Tale of the Parson

of the sacramentis of holy chyrche / And such peneers of chir  
chys put out the chylde of Cryst and put in to the chyrches  
the deuplys owen chylde / They sellen the sowles that shalle  
kepe the lambys to the wolf that strangle hem / And ther  
fore shal they neuer haue parte of the pasture of lambys that is  
in the blisse of heuyn / Now comyth hasardye wyth his apper  
tenauntis as tablys / quardes and reuellys / Of which cometh  
dysceit fals othys / chydnyngs / and alle rauyns / blasfemy  
ges / reynyng of God / hate of his neyghbours / wast of goodis  
myspendyng of tyme / And soomtyme manslaughtur / Certes  
hasardours may not be wythout grete synne whyles they haunten  
that craft / Of Auarice comyth eke / lesynges / theft / fals  
wytnes / And fals othys / And ye shull vnderstande that  
these ten grete synnes and expresse apensse the commaundments  
of god as I haue sayde / Fals wytnes is eke in word and in  
dede / In word as to bytreue thy neyghbours good name by thy  
fals wytnessyng or accusest hym by thy fals wytnes / or elles  
excusist thy self falsely / Ware ye questmongers & notaries / attes  
for fals wytnes was susanna in grete sorolbe and pryn & many  
another mo / The synne of theft is expresse also apensse goddys  
best / and that in thre maners / temporal & spirytuel / the temporal  
theft is as for to take thy neyghbours catel apensse his wyll be  
it by force or by sleight be it in metyng or mesure / by stelyng  
by fals entymementis vpon hym / and in borrowyng thy neygh  
bours catel in entent neuer to paye and semblable thynges /  
Spirytuel theft is sacrilege that is to saye ontyng of holy  
thynges / or of thynges sacred to Crist in thre maners / by reason  
of the holy place / As churcheis and churcheyardes for euery v  
lent synne that men do in such places may be clepyd sacrilege /  
Also they that falsely wythholde the rightes of holy churche / and  
pleyn and generally sacrilege is to reue holy thyng out of holy  
place / or unholy thyng out of holy place / or holy thyng out of  
unholy place / Now shal ye vnderstande that releuyng of auarice  
is mysericorde and ppe largely taken / And men myght asce  
why that mysericorde and ppe is releuyng of auarice / Certes  
the auaricious man shewyth no ppe ne mysericorde to the needful  
man / For he delyteth hym in keepyng of his tresour / and not  
in the rescolvyng ne in the releuyng of his euen crysten /

## The Tale of the Parson

And therefore speke I first of mysericorde / Forenne is mysericorde  
as sayth the phylosophe a vertu by which courage of man is styred  
by the mysere of hym that is mysersed / Upon the which myseri-  
corde wyth pyte in perfourmpnge of charitable werkys of mercy  
helpeth and comforteth hym that is mysersed / And certes thys  
meuyth men to the mysercorde of Ihesu crist that hym self suffred  
for our gylt / He suffred deeth for mysericorde / And forpaf vs  
our origynal synes / And thereby relead fro the payne of helle  
and amenysid the payn of purgatorye / The spyes of myseri-  
corde ben as for to lene and eke for to geue / And for to foryeue  
and for to relea / and for to haue pyte in herte and compassyon  
of myschere of thyn euen cristen / And eke chastyte there as neede  
is / Another remedye agens avaryce is resonable largesse / But  
sotly here behouyth the consideracon of our lord Ihesu Crist and  
of his grace and of his temporel goodys and eke of the goodys  
perdurable that crist gaf vs / and eke to haue remembraunce of  
the deeth that he shal dye and receyue / and he woot not when /  
And eke that he shal forgoon alle that he hath dyspendyd and  
goten in goodys / But for as muche as somme folke be vynesu-  
rable / men oughen eschewe fool largesse that men clepen waste  
Certes he that is foollarge he geuyth not his catel but he lesyth  
his catel / Certes what thyng that he geueth for veynglorye as to  
mynstrels and to folke that here his renome in the world he hath  
do synne and none almes / Certes he lesyth foul his good and  
seketh no thyng but synne / He is like to an hors that seketh ra-  
ther to drynke droppe water and troubyl than water of the cleer  
welle / To hem awerternen the malison that crist shal geue atte  
day of dome to hem that shull be dampned /

### Sequitur de Gula

**A**fter auarice comyth glotonye / which is expresse  
agens the commaundement of god / Glotonye is  
vynesurable appetite to ete or to drynke / or ellis to ete  
vynesurably & out of tyme more than nedeth is gloto-  
ny / this synne corrupted al thys world as is wel shewid in the  
synne of Adam and Eue / So eke what saith Saynt Paule of

## The Tale of the Parson

glotony / Many men sayth he of which I haue oft sayde you / And now I say hit weppng that they be enemyes of the crosse of crist / of which the ende is deth and of which her wombe is her god / and her glorie in confusion of hem that so scrupn crthely thynges / He that is vsaunt to thys synne of glotony / He may no synne wythstande / He mote be in seruage of alle vices for it is the deuplye horde there he hydeth hym in and resyth / This synne hath many spyes / The first is dronkenes / that is the horribble sepulture of mannes reson / And therfore whan that a man is dronke he hath lost his reson and thys is dedely synne / But certes whan a man is not wont to straunge drynke / and peradventure knowyth not the strength of the drynke or hath fellesnes in his hede or hath trauepylled through which he drynketh the more / al be he so deuply caught wyth drynke it is no dedely synne but leupal / The second spye of glotony is / that the spirite of a man wayyth alle trouble / For dronkenes bewythyth hym dyscrecion of his wytte / The thyrd spye of glotony is whan a man deuoureth his mete and hath no rightful maner of etyng / The fourth is whan through the grete habundaunce of his mete the humours of hys body ben dystemperyd / The fyfthe is forgetfulnes by to muche drynkynge / For which a man forgetith by the morowe what he dyd ouer eue / In another maner ben distyncte the spyes of glotony after saynt Gregore / The first is for to ete before tyme / The second is whan a man getith hym to delicate mete / The thyrd is whan men taken to myshyl ouer mesure / The fourth is auarise wyth grete entente to maken and apparaylle his mete / The fyfthe is for to ete greedly / These ben the fyue syngers of the deuplye honde by which he dralwyth folke to synne / Aynste glotony is the remedye abstinence of his body as sayth Galylene / but that holde I not meritorie yf he do hit only for helle of his body / Saynt Austyn wole that abstinence be do by vertu and wyth patience / Abstinence he sayth is litil worth but yf he haue good wyll / and but he be enforad by patience & by charite / And that men do it for goddys sake / and in hope to haue the blisse in heuen / The felawes of abstinence ben attemptaunce that holdeth the mene in al thynges eke shame that eschewyth al dyslioneste suffisaunce that sekith no ryght metis ne drynke ne doth no force of none outrageous apparayllinge of mete /

## The Tale of the Parson

Also that reſtreyneþ by reſon the deſaupe appetite of etyng and  
drynkynge / Sobernes alſo that reſtreyneþ the outrage of drynke  
ſparynge alſo that reſtreyneþ the dylacate eaſe to ſitte long at his  
mete / Wherefore ſomme folke ſcander of her olben wyſke when  
they ete by cauſe they wyll ete at laſſe leſer /

### Sequitur de Luxuria

**A**fter glotonie thenne comyth lecherie / For theſe two  
ſynnes ben ſo nygh coſyns that oft tyme they wyll not  
departe / Godd woot this ſynne is ful diſpleſaunt to  
godd / For he ſayde hym ſelf doo no lecherie / And  
therefore he putteþ grete peynes apenſt thys ſynne / For in tholde  
la we yf a woman thral were taken in thys ſynne ſhe ſhold be  
betyn wyth ſcaups to the deſth / And yf ſhe were a gentil woman  
ſhe ſhold be ſlayn wyth ſtonys / And yf ſhe were a byſſhoppys  
doughter ſhe ſhold be brent by goddys commaundement / Further  
more for the ſynne of lecherie godd dreynt alle the world / And  
after that he brent fyue cytres and ſanke down in to ſelle / Now  
lete vs ſpeke thenne of the ſynne of lecherie that men clepen ad  
uoultre that is of Weddyng folke that is to ſaye yf that one of  
hem ben weddyd or ellys bothe / Saynt Johan ſayth  
that thauolwatre ſhulle be in a ſynkyng breynnyng pytte of fyre  
and brymſton / For lecherie is likenyd to brymſton for the ſynk  
of her ordure / Certes the breynnyng and brykynge of thys ſacra  
ment is an horryble thyng / Hit was made of godd hym ſelf in  
paradyſe and conſermed by Jheſu criſt / As ſayth ſaynt matthew  
in the goſpel / A man ſhal lete fader & moder & take hym to hys  
wyf / & they ſhal be in one fleſſh / this ſacrament betokeneth the  
knyttynge to gyder of criſt & holy churche / & not only that godd for  
bad auowtry in dede / but eke he comaunded that thou ſholdſt not  
coueyte thy neyghbours wyf / In this beſt ſaith ſaynt auſtyn / All  
maner couetiſe to do lechery is forbidden / So what ſaith ſaynt ma  
thew in the goſpel who ſo ſeeth a woman to couetiſe of his luſt /  
he hath don lechery with her in his herte / Here may ye ſe that not  
only the dede of this ſynne is forbode / but eke the deſire to do that  
ſynne / This curſyd ſynne anoyeth greuouſly hem that it haunte  
and fiſt to the ſoule / For he obligeth it to ſynne and to peyne  
of deſth that is perdurable / and to the body anoyeth it greuouſly  
For it dryeth hym / And of his blood he makyth ſacrifyſe

## The Tale of the Parson

to the fende of helle/hit was with his catel and his substaunce/and  
certes yf it be a foule thyng a man to waste his catel on women  
yet is hit a fouler thyng that wthan for such ordure women spe  
den vpon men her catel and substaunce / This sprynge as sayth the  
prophete breugeth a man & a woman her good fame and alle her  
honour/and it is ful playfaunt to the deupl/ For therby wynneth  
be the most party of this world / And right as a marchaunt deli  
teth hym most in chaffare that he hath most auantage of / right  
so deliteth the fende in this ordure / This is that other hand of  
the deupl woth fyue springes to catch the peple to this synne  
The first springer is the foule loking of the fool woman that sleeth  
right as the basilicok sleeth folke by the denyng of his sight / For  
couetise of the eyen foloweth the couetyse of the herte / The second  
springer is the vylayns touchyng in wyckedy maner / And ther  
fore sayth Salamon / That who so touchyth and handelith a wo  
man / He farith lyke hym that handleth the scorppon that styng  
yth and so deynly sleeth through his enuemyng or as who so  
touchyth pitch he shendyth his synngre / The thyrde is foule wor  
de that farith lyke fyre that brennyth that right anon brennyth  
the herte / The fourth is kysyng/and trewly he were a greet fol  
that wold kisse the mouth of a brennyng ouyn or of a furnes  
And more foolish ten they that kysen in synne / For that  
mouth is the mouth of helle / And namely these olde dotardys  
holours yet wyl they kisse though they may not do & smater hem  
Certes they be like to houndys/ For an hound wthan he cometh by  
the Roser or by other benches yf he may not pisse yet wyl he haue  
vpon his legges and make countenaunce to pisse / And for that  
man wenyth that he may not synne for lechousnes that he doth  
with his wyf / Certes that oppynon is false God woot a man  
may sle hym self with his owen knyf & make hym dronke with  
his owen wyne Certes be it wyf or chylde or worldly thyng yf he  
cougeth before god it is his malwmet/and he is an ydolastre/ man  
shold loue his wyf by dyscrecion paciently and attemperatly /  
And than is she as though she were his suster / The fyfthe  
springer of the deuplis honde is the synnyng dede of lechery / He  
grypeth hym by the wyne for to throlbe hym in to the furnes of  
helle/there as they shal haue the fyre and the wormys that euer  
shal lasten / wepyng and waylyng / sharpe hunger and thyrst

## The Tale of the Parson

Crystynes of deuplis that shul al to trede hym without respite  
and withouten ende / Of lecherye as I said fourden dyuerse spyes  
as fornicacion that is set by man & woman that ben not married  
and this is dedely synne & ayenst nature / and destruction to natu-  
re is ayenst nature / Perfor the wison telleth hym eke that it is de-  
dely synne for as muche as god forbod lecherye / And saynt poule  
teugeth hym the regne that is due to no wyght / but to hem that do  
no dedely synne / Another synne of lecherye is to bereuen a mayde  
of her maydenhode / For certes he that so doth he catchith a mayde  
out of the hyest degre that is in this present lyf / And bereueth  
her that precious fruyt that the booke clepeth the hundred fruyt /  
I can say it none other wyse in englyssh / but in latyn it hight  
centesimus fructus / Certes he that so doth is cause of many dam-  
ages and bylonyes mo than ony man can reken / Right as  
he somtyme is cause of alle damages that bestes do in the felde  
that breketh the hedge of the closure / through which he destroyeth  
that may not be restorid / For certes nomore may maydenhode be  
restored / than an arme that is smytyn fro the body may retorne  
ayen to be ye / She may haue mercy this woot I wel / yf she doo  
penitence / But neuer shal it be / but that she is corrupt / & al be it so  
that I haue spoke somwhat of auoultrye / it is good to shewe in  
perill is that longen to auoultrye for to eschewe the foule synne  
of auoultrye / In latyn it is for to save thapprochyng of another  
mannys bed / through which they that were one flessh inbunden  
her bodies to other persones / Of this synne as saith the wyse man  
come many harmes / first brekyng of feyth / & certes feyth is keye  
of Crystendome / And whan that keye is broken and lorn cer-  
teyn crystendom standeth wythout fruyt / This synne is eke theft  
for theste generally to speke of / is for to reue a thyng of a man  
ayenst his wyll / Certes this is the foulest theft that may be  
whan a woman steleth her body from her husbond & reugeth it to  
her labour to defoule it / and steleth her soule from crist and reugeth  
hit to the deupl / This is a foule theft for to stele and breke  
the chalys / For thys auoultraris breken the temple of god  
spyrtyuelly and steien the vessel of grace / That is the body and  
the soule / For which Cryst shalle destroy hem as saith saynt  
paul / Sothly of thys theft doubtyd gretey Joseph / whan  
that his lordes wyf prayedy hym of bylonye whan he sayde /

## The Tale of the Parson

So my lady / how my lord hath talle to me vnder my barde all  
that he hath vnder thys world / ne no thyng is out of my power  
but only ye that he his wyf / And how shold I thenne doo thys  
wyckednes and synne so horryble ayenst god / Alas al to lytil  
is such trouble now I founde / The thyrde harme is / the fylthe  
thruugh which they breke the commaundement of god and defoule  
the auter of her matrymonye that is crist / For certes in so mykil  
as the sacrament of mariage is so noble and so digne so muche  
it is the gretter synne to breke it / For god made mariage in pa-  
radys in the state of Innocence to multiplyr mankynde to the ser-  
uice of god / And therefore is the brekyng therof greuous / Of  
whiche brekyng comen fals heryes / often tyme that wrongfully  
occupyen folkes heritages / And therefore wyl Crist put hem  
out of the regne of heuen that is heritage to good folke /  
Of thys brekyng comyth eke that folke vnlwaar wedde / or  
synne wyth her olven kyndred / And namely the harlottis that  
haunten bordellys / Thys fool women molbe be assennd to a cos-  
myng gonge wher as men purge her ordure / What say we eke  
of putters that lyuen by the horryble synne of putrye / and con-  
scyence women / ye forame her olven wyys or his chyld as  
don thys salldys to yelde hem a certyn rente of her bodely putrye  
Certes thys ben cursyd synnyngs / vnderstonde ye eke that aduoul-  
trye is sette comynly in the ten commaundementis betwene theft  
and manslaughter / For it is the grettest thefte that may be /  
For it is thefte of body and of soule / And it is like to homy-  
cide / For it keryth a lye hem that first were made one flesch /  
And by the olde salwe they shold be slayn / But netheles by the  
salwe of ihesu crist that is the salwe of pyte / whan he sayd to the  
woman that was founde in auoutrye / and shold haue be slayn  
wyth stones after the wyl of the ielous as was her salwe / Goo  
quod ihesu crist and haue no more wyke to doo synne / Sothly  
vengeaunce of aduoultre is albarde to the payne of helle /  
But it be dyscourdyd wyth penaunce / Yet ben there mo synners of  
thys cursyd synne as whan that one of hem is relygious or eccle-  
siastike / or of folke that ben entrid in to ordre as subdeken / or de-  
con / prest or hospitallers / and euer the hyer that he is in ordre  
the gretter is the synne / For they haue made gret wyllys to kepe  
thys synne / This synne of brekyng of his auolbe of chastite is

## The Tale of the Parson

Whan he receyved order / And soth it is that holy order is chref  
of alle the tresour of god and is a special signe and marke of  
chastyte which that is the moost precyous kyf that is / And eke  
thys ordred folke ben specially tyled to god for whiche whan  
they doo dedely synne / they ben the special traytours of god and  
of his peple / For they lyue by the peple to praye for the peple  
And whyles they be such traytours for prayers auayle not to  
the peple / Prestys ben as aungellys as by the mystery of her  
dygnyte / But forsoth Saynt Paule sayth that Sathanas  
transfourmeth hym in an aungel of light / Sothly the prest that  
hauntith synne he may be lykenyd to an aungel of darknes  
transfourmed in to an aungel of light / He semeth an aungel  
of light / But forsoth he is an aungel of darknes / Such prestes  
ben the sones of hely as is shewed in the booke of kynges that  
they were the sonys of helyal / that is the deyl / helyal is to  
saye wythouten iuge / And so faren they / hem thynketh that  
they be free & haue no iuge nomore than hath a fre houle that takith  
whiche colbe that hym lyketh in the toun / so faren they by wo-  
men / For right as a fre houle is ynough for alle a toun / right  
so is a corrupte prest ynough for alle a parisshe or a contree / thys  
prestys as sayth the booke knowe not the mynystery of presthod  
to the peple ne to god ne they holde hem not apayed as sayth the  
booke of sode flessh that was to hem offryd / but they take by force  
the flessh that is calbe / Certes right so thys shrewde holde hem  
not a payd of wylde flessh and soden wyth which the peple feden  
hem in grette reuerence / but they wyl haue calbe flessh as folkis  
wyues and her doughters / And certes thys women that con-  
sentyn to her harlottis do grette wrong to crist and to holy chyrche  
to alle harlottes and to alle solkis / For they bereuen hem alle  
that shold worship crist and holy chyrche / And also to prayen  
for alle cristen solkis / And therfore haue such prestes and her  
lemmans that consentyn to her lecherye the malison of the crysten  
court til they come to amendement / The thyrde spyce of aduoultry  
is somtyme hellyp a man and his wyf / And that is whan they  
take no regarde in theyre assemblyng but only for flesshly delyte  
as sayth saynt Jerome and recke of nothyng but they be assem-  
blyd by cause they be married / Al is good ynough as thynketh  
to hem / But in such folke hath the deyl powver as sayde the

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angel Raphael to Tobye For in her assemblyng they put Ihu  
Cryste out of her herte / & geue hem self to alle ordure / The fourth  
spce is of hem that assemblyn by her kynrede or of hem that ben  
of one affynyte / Or elles wyth hem wyth Whom her faders had  
depyd wyth the synne of lecherie / This synne maketh hem lyke  
houndes that taken none hede of kynrede / And certis parentela  
is in thre maners / or ghoostly / flesshly / ghoostly is for to de  
lyn wyth her gossybs / For right so as a godfader is her fader  
spyrtyuel / For whiche a woman may in no lesse synne semble  
wyth her gossyb than wyth her owen broder / The fyfthe synne  
is that abhomynable synne of whiche no man ought to speke of /  
ne write / netheles it is openly reherced in holy writ / Certis holy  
writ may not be defouled more than the sonne that shynyth on a  
doughyll / Another synne apperteyneth to lecherie that co  
meth in slepyng / And thys synne cometh ofte to hem that ben  
maydens and eke to hem that ben corrupt / And thys synne is  
cleped pollucion / That cometh in four maners / Somtyme it co  
meth of languysshyng of the body of man / Somtyme it cometh  
of Infirmyte for the feblenes of the vertue wrentyt as physik ma  
kyth mencion / Somtyme of surfete of mete and drynke / And  
sometyme for vpolente thoughtis that ben enclosed in mannes  
mynde whan he goth to slepe / whiche may not be wyth out synne  
For whiche men must kepe hem wpsely / or elles may they synne  
greuously / Now comyth remedye agens lecherie / and that is  
generally chastyte and contynence that refrenneth al dysordynat  
meuyngys that comyn of flesshly talentis / And euer the greater  
merite shal he haue that refrenneth most the wycked chauffyng  
or ordure of thys synne / And thys is in thre maners / that is  
to saye chastyte of mariage and chastyte of wydolhed / Now  
shalt thou vnderstonde that matrymonye is lefful assemblyng  
of man and woman that receyuen the vertue of the sacrament / the  
bonde whych that may not be departyd in al her lyf / thys is to  
saye whyles they lyue bothe / This is as sayth the booke a ful  
grette sacrament / God made it as I haue sayd in paradise & wold  
 hym self be born in mariage / And for to kaloune mariage he was  
atte weddyng Where he turned water in to wyne / whiche was  
the first myracle that he brought in erthe to fore his dysciples /  
The twelue effect of mariage clenseth fornicacion and replenyssheth

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holy chyrche of goodr lygnage / For as the ende of mariage  
chaungyth dedely synne in to venyal bytvene hem that ben wedd  
dyd and makyth the lertes al one as wel of hem as the bodyes  
Thus is bett mariage that is stablysshed by god or that synne  
fegan whan naturel salve was in his right poynt in paradys  
And it was ordeyned that a woman shold haue but one man /  
As sayth Saynt Austyn by many resons / Yfirst that mariage  
is fygyred betwene crist and holy chyrche / And another is that  
a man is hede of the woman asgate by ordenaunce it shold be so  
For yf a woman had mo men than one / thenne shold she haue  
mo hedyes than one / And that were an horryble thyng before  
god / And eke a woman myght not plese many folke attones  
And also there shold neuer be woe ne wele amonge them for eue  
ryche wold aske his owen thyng / And furthermore noman shold  
knowe his owen engendrure ne who shold haue his heritage /  
and the woman shold be lasse buyd fro the tyme that she were  
comyt wyth many / Now comyth how a man shold bete  
hym wyth his wyf and namely in thre thynges that is to saye  
in suffraunce and in reuerence / And thys shewed first Crist  
whan he made first woman / For he made her not of adams heed  
For she shold not haue to gyfte lordshyp / For there as the wo  
man hath the masterye she makyth to muche dysaray / There ned  
none ensaumolis of this / Theyperence that we haue day by day  
ought to suffre / Also certes he made not the woman of the  
feet of Adam / for she shold not be holde to solbe / For she can not  
patiently suffre / But god made woman of the Ryb of Adam /  
For woman shold be felowe vnto man / Man shold bete hym to  
his wyf / in sayth / in trouthe / and in loue as sayth saynt Poule  
and that man shold loue his wyf as crist dyd holy chyrche that  
buyd it so wel that he deyed for hit / So shold a man for his  
wyf yf it were ned / Now how that a woman shold be subget  
to her husband that telleth Saynt Peter and eke as sayth the de  
ce / A woman as long as she is a wyf / she hath none auctoryte  
to sberre ne to kepe wytnes wythout leue of her husband / And  
also she shold be honest and attemperat of aray / I note wel  
that they shold sette her entent to plese her husbandys / But not  
by queyntise of her aray / Saynt Jerome sayth that wyues ben  
appareyld in sylke and in purpure / may not clothen hem in Jhu

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Crist / Saynt Gregore sayth eke that no wyght seeketh no precious aunge / but only kyn glorie to be honoured the more before the peple / hit is a greet folye a woman to haue greet aray out Ward / and her self to be foule inward / A wyf shold eke be mesurable / in lokyng / in leryng and in laudyng and dyscrete in alle her wordes and her dedes / And aboue al worldly thynges she shold loue her husbond wyth alle her herte and to hym be trewe of her body / So shold euery husbond eke be trewe to his wyf / for sithen alle the body is the husbonds so shold her herte be also / or elles there is betwyx hem tbo no parfit mariage as in that / Than shalke a man vnderstonde that for thre thynges a man and his wyf mo we assemble / The first for the intent of gendrure of chyldren to the serupse of god / For certis that is the cause synal of matrimony / That othe is to yelde eueryche of hem the dete of her body / For neyther of hem hath power of hys owen body / The thyrd is for to schelbe lecherye and bylonge / The fourth forsoth is dedely synne / As to the first it is meritorie The second also for the detre sayth she hath merite for that she yeldyth to her husbond the dete of her body / Ye though it be aynt her leryng and the lust of her herte / The thyrd maner whyche is to schelbe lecherye / I helde it no dedely synne / but many of thise be not wythout venyal synne for the corupcion and delict therof / The fourth maner is to vnderstande yf that they assemble only for amercouse loue and for none of the forsayd causes but for to accomplissh the breynnyng detre they wylke neuer how ofte / Sothly it is a dedely synne / And yet wyth sorowbe some folke wyl payne hem more to doo than her appetyt suffyseth / The second maner of chastyte is to be clene wyddowe to eschelbe the brasynge of man and to desyre them brasynge of Jhesu Crist Thise ben tho that haue ben wyues and haue forgoon her husbonds / And eke women that haue doon lecherye / And be releuyd by penaunce / And certis yf that a wyf can kepe her alle chaste by herte of her husbond / so that she gaf no cause ner none occasion that be agyled / Hyt were to her greet meryte / These maner of women that obseruen chastyte must be clene in herte as wel as in body and in thought and mesurable in clothynge and in countenaunce abstinent in etyng and drynkynge / in spekyng and in dede / And thenne is she vessel of the bove of the blessed

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Maudeleyn that fulfilled holý chýrche ful of goodý odour / The  
thyrdý maner of chastyte is byrgynpte / And hit behoupyth that  
she be holý in herte andý clene of body / Therne is she the spouse  
to Ihesu crist / andý she is the lyf of aungellys / she is the prey-  
sunge of thys worldý andý she is as thys martir in Regalre /  
She hath in her that tinge may not telle / Wirgynpte bare our  
lordý Ihesu cryst / Andý byrgynpte was hym self / Another reme-  
dy agaynst lecherie is specially to wythdraue such thynges as ge-  
uyn occasion to that vylonye as etyng andý drynkynge / For certes  
whan the pot boyleth strongly / The best remedye is to wythdraue  
the fyre / Sleppng longe in grete quyet is eke a grete norice  
to lecherie / Another remedye agaynst lecherie is that a woman  
or a man eschelve compayns of hem by whiche he demeth to be temp-  
tydý for alle be it so that the dede be wythstande yet is there grete  
temptacion / Sothly a whyte wal al though it brenne not fully  
by the styngynge of a candel / yet is the wal black of the light /  
In like wyse ofte tymes such persones haue euyl name by cause  
they draue .i. vicious compayne / wel oft tyme haue I redde  
that no man trust in his owen perfection / but be he strengier than  
Sampson / holper than Dauidý / wysier than Salamon / Now  
after as I haue declaredý you as I can of the vñ dedely synnes &  
somme of her braunches andý her remedies / Sothly yf I coude I  
wolde telle you the ten commaundementis / but so high a doctryne  
I lete to dyspynes But netheles I trust to godý they be touchydý  
in thys tretýse euerych of hem alle /

### Adhuc secunda pars penitencie /

**N**ow as to the secondý parte of penytence hit stont in  
confessyon of mouth as I began in the secondý chappýtre  
to for: / Saynt Austyn sayth synne is in euery word  
andý in euery dede / Andý alle that men coueten apense  
the salve of Ihesu crist / Andý this is for to synne in herte in  
mouth andý in dede by thy fyue wyttis / that ben sight / heeryng  
smellyng / tastynge or sauourynge andý felynge / Now is it good  
to vnderstande the acausementis that agrydgen mykyl euery

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synne / Thou shalt considere what thou art that dost the synne / whether thou be male or female / yong or olde / gentil or thral / fre or seruicant / wyse or fool / hool or sike / Weddyd or synge / ordred or vncordred / clerke or secular / If the be of thy kynde bodyly or ghostly or none / a mayden or none / in maner of how made or none / horryble grete synne or smal / and how long thou hast contynued in synne / The thyrde Circumstaunce is the place where thou hast don synne / whether in other mennys howsis or in thy own / in felde or in chyrche or in chyrchyard / In chyrche dedicate or non / For yf the chyrche were hallowyd and man or woman spelle his kynde wythyn that place by wey of synne or by wycked temptation the chyrche were entredyd til it were reconaled by the bysshop / And the prest shold be entredyd that dyde such a vylonye / terme of his lyf and he shold nomore synge masse / and yf he dyde he shold do dedely synne at euery tyme that he song masse / The fourth circumstaunce is by such mediatours as by messangers or for entysement or for consentement to bere companye wyth felabshyp / For many one for to bere felabshyp wyl goo to the deup of lakke / For they that eggygn or consentyn to the synne ben parteners to the synne and of the dampnacion of the synnar / The fyfthe is how many tymes that he hath synned and it be in his mynde / and how oft he hath falle / For he that ofte fallyth in synne he despyseth the mercy of god and encreaseth his synne / And is vnkynde to god / And he becomyth the more feble to wythstande synne / And synneth the more lightly / and the latter ariseth / and the more escheweth for to shryue hym / and namely to hym that hath ben his confessour / For whiche that folke whan they falle aghen in hir olde folyes they forletyn hir olde confessours al vtraly / Or elles they departen hir shryfte in dyuerse places / But sothly such departyd shryfte deserveth no mercy of god for his synnes / The sixthe circumstaunce is this why that a man synneth / as by what temptation / and of hym self procure thyslike temptation / or by excytyng of othe folke / or yf thou synne wyth a woman by force or by her own assent / Or yf the woman maynten her freed haue be enforced or not / and whether for couetise or pouerte / Alle thys shalt thou telle / and yf it was her prouryng or no and alle such maner thyngs / The seuenth circumstaunce is in what

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maner he hath doon his synne / or how that he hath suffryd? how  
folke haue doon to yr / and of the same shalle the man telle alle  
the circumstauncis / And yf that he haue synned byth comyn  
bordel women or none / in fastyng tymes or none / or doon hys  
synne in holy tymes or none / or befor hys shryfte / or after hys  
latter shryfte / and hath perauenture therfore broken his penaunce  
enioyned / by whos lere and whos counceyl / by sorcery or  
craft / alle must be tolde thys thynges after that they be grete or  
smalle and grudge the consaunt of man or woman / And eke  
the preest that is the iuge may the better be awysid of his iuge-  
ment / In peuping of his penaunce / and that shal be after his  
contiaon / For vnderstonde wel that after tyme that a man hath  
defouled his baptisme by synne / yf he wyl come to sauacion / there  
is none other waye but penaunce and thurst & satisfaction / and  
namely by the ilke / yf there be a confessor to whom he may  
shryue hym / And that he first be truly contrite and repentaunt  
And the thyrd yf he haue lye to perfourme it / Thenne shalle  
man loke and considere yf he wyl make a twelve and a prouff-  
table confessyon / there must be four condicions / First hit must  
be in sorowful bitternes of herte as sayd the kyng Ezechye to god  
I wyl remembre alle the yeres of my lyf in the bytternes of my  
herte / This condicion of bytternes hath true signes / The first  
is that confessyon must be shamefast not for to coueryn ne to  
hyde his synne / But for he hath agyled his god and defouled  
his soule / And herof sayth Saynt Austyn / The herte traueyleth  
for shame of his synne / And for he hath grete shamefastnes / he  
is digne to haue grete mercy / whiche was the confessyon of the  
puphane that wolde not lyfte by his eyen to heuen / For he had  
offendyd god of heuen / For whiche shamefastnes he had anon  
the mercy of god / And therfore sayth saynt austyn / That suche  
shamefast folke ben next foryeuenes and remysse / That  
other synne is humylite of confessyon of whiche sayth saynt Peter  
Humbleth you vnder the myghty honde of god in confessyon /  
For therby god foryeueth the synnes for he allone hath power /  
This humylite shal be in herte and in signe outwarde / For right  
as he hath humylite to god in his herte / Ryght so shold he hum-  
ble his body outwarde to the preest that sitteth in goddes place /  
For whiche in no maner / sithyns that criste is souereyn and the

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preeft mene and medycoure byllbene cryst and the synnar And  
the synnar is lesse by weye of reson / Than shold not the synnar  
speke as hygh as his confessor / but knele before hym or at  
his feet but yf maladye destourbe hit / For he shal not take kepe  
wher sit there but in whos place he sitteth / A man that hath tres-  
passed to a lord & comyth for to aue mercy and make his accorde  
and seth hym down enow by the lord / Men wold holde hym out  
rageous and not worthy so sone to haue remission ne mercy /  
The thyrde signe is that thy schryfte shold be ful of tene yf man  
may wepe / And yf a man may not wepe wyth his bodely eyen  
lete hym wepe in his herte / Suche was the confessyon of Saynt  
Peter / For after he had forsake Ihesu Crist he went out and  
wepte ful bytterly / The fourth sygne is that he lete not for  
shame to shryue hym and shelve his confessyon / Suche was the  
confessyon of Malcolene / that spard for no shame of hym that  
were at the feste / For to goo to our lord Ihesu Crist & knowle-  
be to hym his synne / The fyfthe sygne is that man and woman  
be obeyssaunt to wepue the penaunce that is enioyned hem / For  
certes Ihesu Crist for the gylt of one man was obedynt to the  
deth / The second condycion of very confessyon is that hit be  
hastely doon / For certes yf a man had a dedely wounde / euer  
the longer that he taried to heale hym / the more wold it cor-  
rupte and haste hym to his deth / and eke the wounde be the worse  
for to hele / Right so fauith synne that long tyme is in a man  
vnshelepyd / Certes a man ought hastely to shelve his synne for  
many causes / And for drede of deth that cometh oft tyme so so-  
denly and is in no certeyn what tyme it shal be ne in what place  
And eke the longer he tarieth the further is he fro Crist / And yf  
he abyde vnto his last day / scarcely may he shryue or amende hym  
for his synnes or repente hym for the greuous maladye of his  
deth And for as muche as he hath not in his lyf berkenyd Ihesu  
crist when he hath spoken vnto hym / he shal crye vnto our Lord  
at his last day and scarcely he shalle berken hym / Understonde  
that this condycion must haue four thynges / First that thy  
schryfte be purged afore and auyged / And that a man can  
shryue hym of his synnes be it of pryde or of enuye and so forth  
wyth the synnes and circumstaunces / And that he haue compre-  
hended in his mynde the nombre and the gretnes of his synnes

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and how long he hath leyn in synne and eke that he be contrite of  
his synnes/ & he in stedfast purposos by the grace of god neuer este  
to falle ayeen in to synne to which he is enclyned/ also thou shalt  
shryue the of al thy synnes to one man / & not parcelmele to one  
man & parcelmele to another/ Thin is it to be vnderstonde in then  
tent to parten thy confessyon as for shame or drede for it nys but  
strangelyng in thy soule/ for certes Jhu crist is al good/ in hym is  
none impfection / & therefore he foryeuyth al parfightly/ and ellys  
neuer a deel/ I say not yf thou be assigned to the penitencier for  
certeyn synne that thou art bounde to shelve hym al the remenaunt  
of thy synnes of which thou hast be shryuen of thy curate but yf  
it like the of thy humylite / this is no departyng of shifte/ ne I  
say not there as I speke of dysuysion of confessyon / that yf thou  
haue licence to shryue the to a discrete & an honest prest / & whiche  
the liketh/ and by the licence of thy curate/ that thou ne mayst wel  
shryue the of al thy synnes / but leet no blot lehynde / leet no  
synne be vndolde as fer as thou hast remembraunce / And when  
thou shalt be shryuen of thy curate / telle hym eke al the synnes  
that thou hast don syth thou were last shryuen / Also the very  
shifte as hath certeyn condicions / First thou shalt shryue the by  
thy fre wyl/ not constreyned ne for shame of folk / ne for maladye  
or such thynges/ for it is reson that he that trespasseth by his  
fre wyl confesse his trespass / ne none other man shal telle his  
synne/ ne wrath hym agens the prest for his amonestyng to leet  
his synne/ The second condycion is that thy shifte be lawful/ that  
is to saye / thou that shryuest the/ & eke the prest that herith thy  
confessyon ben verily in the feyth of holy church/ and that a man  
be not despyred of the mercy of Jhu crist as cayn and Judas  
were / And eke a man must accuse hym self of his owen trespass  
and not another / But he shal blame and wyte hym self of  
his owen malice and of his synne and none other / but netheles  
yf another man by enclenon of entysyng of his synnes / or yf the  
estate of a person be such by which his synne is agreddyd or  
els that he may not pleyndly shryue but he telle the person which  
he hath synned with/ thenne may he telle / So that his entente be  
not to lychte the persone / but only to declare his confessyon/  
Thou shalt eke make no lesyng in thy confessyon for humylite  
operauenture to saye that thou hast don synnes of which thou

## The Tale of the Parson

were neuer gylty / For saynt Austyn sayth / yf thou by cause  
of humylite makyst a lesyng of thy self though thou were not in  
synne afore / yet art thou in synne thenne thurgh thy lesyng /  
Thou shalt eke shelve thy synne by thy propre mouth but thou  
be dombe / And not by letter / for thou that hast do synne / thou  
shalt haue the shame of thy confessyon / Thou shalt not eke  
paynte thy confessyon by fayr and subtil wordes to couere the  
more thy synne / For thenne begylest thou thy self / and not the  
preest / thou must tke it pleyntly be it neuer so horryble ne so foul  
Thou shalt eke shryue the to a preest that is dyscrete to counayll  
the / And eke thou shalt not shryue the for weyn glorie ne for  
pocess / ne for no cause but only for the doubte of Jhesu Crist  
and the hake of thy soule / Thou shalt not eke come to the preest  
al sodenly to telle hym lightly thy synne as who telleth a iape or  
a tale but auysedly wyth grette deuocion and general to shryue  
the of all than onys of synne which thou hast be shryuen of / it  
is the more merite / For as sayth saynt Austyn / thou shalt haue  
the more lightly reles and grace of god / bothe of synne and of  
payne / And wretches onys a yere at the lest were it is lawful for  
to be houseled / For sothly ones a yere al thynges renouelyn /

### Inapit tertia pars penitencie /

**N**ow haue I tolde of very confessyon that is the second  
part of penitence / The thyrde parte is satisfaccion  
And stondeth generally in almes dede and in bodely  
pygh / Now ben there thre maner of almesse contricion  
of herte where a man offrait hym self to god / A nother is to haue  
pyte of default of his neyghbours / The thyrde is in peyngge  
of good counayll and comforte bodely and ghoostly where men  
haue nede and namely in substaunce of mannes food /  
And take kepe that a man hath nede of these thynges generally  
he hath nede of food of clothyng and herberowh / he hath nede of  
charitable counaylling and visyng in praison / and maladye and  
sepulture of dede bodies / And yf thou mayst not visite the nede  
ful wyth thy persone / visite hym wyth thy message and thy  
pestes / These ben the general almesse of werkyng of charite of  
hem that haue temporel richesse or discrecion in counaylling /

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Of these Werkes shalt thou live at the day of dome thys almesse  
shalt thou doo of thy proper thynges and hastily and priuely  
yf thou mayst / But netheles yf thou mayst not doo it priuely  
thou shalt not forfere to do almes though men see hit / so that it  
be not do for thanke of the world / but only for to haue thanke  
of our lord Ihesu crist / For as witnesseth saynt Mattheu / A  
cypre may not be hyde that is sette vpon a mounteyn / Ne men  
light not a lantern and put hit vnder a bushell / but setten it  
vpon a candelspeck to lighten the men in the hous / Right so shal  
your light / lighten before men that they molbe see your good  
werkes and glorie your fader that is in heuen / Molbe as for  
to speke of bodily peyn / it stont in prayers / in waking / in fast  
tyng and in vertuous trechpyng of orisons / ye shal vnderstande  
that orisons or prayers is for to save / A pietous boye of herte  
that is redressed in god and expressing it by worde outwarde to  
remoue harmeful thynges / & to haue thynges spiriuel & durable  
and somtyme temporel thynges / Of which orisons / in the orison  
of our uoster hath Ihu crist enchosyd most thynges / Certes it is  
pryncipled of thre thynges in his dignyte / for which it is more  
digne than any other prayer for that Ihesu Crist hym self made it  
and it is short / for it shold be coude the more lightly / and for to  
withholde more esely in herte / and helpe hym self the oter with  
thorison / And for a man shold be the lesse lery to save it / And  
for a man may not excuse hym to lerne it / hit is so shorte and so  
esy / And for it comprehendith in hym self alle good prayers  
The exposition of thys holy prayer that is so excellent and so digne  
I take to the maysters of theologie / Saue thus muche wyll  
I saye / That when thou prayest that god shold forgyue the  
hy gyltes as thou forgyuest hem that haue agylted the / We  
wel ware that thou be not out of charite / Thys holy orison ame  
nith eke venyal synne / And therefore it apperteyneth specially  
to penytence / Thys prayer must be truly sayd in very feyth / and  
that men praye to god ordynally / dyscreetly / and deuoutly /  
Alkebay a man shal put his wyll to be subiect to the wyll of god  
this orison must eke be sayd wyth grete humblenes and ful pure  
and honestly / and not to the anoysaunce of any man or woman  
hit must eke be contynued wyth werkes of charite / hit auayleth  
eke ayenst the vyces of the soule / For as sayth saynt Iherome /

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By fastyng he sauyd the Bytes of the flessh / and by prayre the  
Bytes of the soule / After this thou shalt vnderstonde that bodely  
peny stont in Wakyng / For Ihesu crist sayth / Wake and  
praye so that ye ne entre in to bycked temptacion / ye shal vnder  
stande that fastyng standeth in thre thynges / in forbernyng of bo  
dely mete & drynke / and in forbernyng of worldly iolities / & in  
forbernyng of dedely synne with al his myght / and thou shalt vnder  
stonde that god ordeyned fastyng / and to fastyng apperteyneth  
four thynges / largenes to your folke / gladnes in herte / spiritual  
not to be angryd ne to be annoyd ne to geutche for he fasteth / And  
also resonable houre for to ete by mesure / That is to saye that a  
man shold not ete in vntyme ne sitte the longer at his table  
for he fasteth / Therne shalt thou vnderstonde that bodely peny  
stondyth in dysaplyne or techyng by word or by writyng / or  
by ensauple / Also in leryng of herte or of stomack / or of an  
hangeron on her naked flessh for crystes sake / and that such ma  
ner penaunce ne make not thy herte bytter or angry ne aueyde  
of thy self / For better is to cast alway thy herte than to cast a  
way the swete of our lord Ihesu crist / and therfore saith seynt  
Paul / Clothe you as they that ben chosen of god in herte / Of  
mysericorde / of bonapete / of suffraunce and such maner of clothynge  
In whiche Ihesu crist is more apayed than in an herte or hangeron  
on / Than is dysaplyne eke in knockyng of thy herte / in scour  
gyng with yerds / in knelyng / in tribulacions / in suffryng paci  
ently wrongys that be do to hym / and eke in patient suffryng of  
maladyes / or lesynges / of worldly catel / or wyf / or childe / or other  
frendie / Therne shalt thou vnderstonde whiche thynges destourben  
penaunce / And this is in thre maners that is drede / shame / and  
wantowpe that is desperation / And for to speke of drede / for whiche  
he beneth he may suffre no penaunce / there ayenst is remedye for  
to thynke that bodely penaunce is but short atte regarde of hel /  
that is cruel and so long that it lastyth withouten ende /  
Nolw ayenst shame that a man hath to shewe hym / Shold a  
man thynke by waye of reson / That he hath not to be ashamed  
to doo foule thyng / Certis hym ought not to be ashamed to do  
feyr thynges and good thynges / And that is confessyons /  
A man shold thynke that god boot alle his thoughtis and  
his werkes and to hym may nothyng be hyde ne couerdy /

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Men shold eke remembre hem of the shame that is to come at the day of dome to hem / that be not penitent in this present lyf / For al the creatures in heuen and in erthe and in helle shul see aperly alle that they hyden in thys world / Now for to speke of hem that ben so necligent and folwe to shryue hem / it stondeth in two maners / That one is that he hopeth to lyue long / And for to purchace much riches for his delyte / And thenne wyl he shryue hym as he sayth / He may as hym semeth tyme to come to shryfte / Another is the surquydre that he hath in Cristes mercy / And aynste the first he shalle thynke that our lyf is in no sikernes / And eke that all the riches of the world is in aventure and passyng as a shadowe on a walke / And as saith saynt gregore that it apparteyneth to the grette rightwysnesse of god / that neuer shal the peny synners of them that neuer wold withdraue hem fro synne for thankyng but euer continued in synne / For that perpetuel wyll to doo synne / shal they haue perpetuel penyne / Wanhope is in two maners / The first wanhope is in the mercy of god / That other is that they thynke that they may not long perseuere in goodnes / The first wanhope cometh of that he demeth that he hath synned so gretly / so ofte and so longe leyn in synne that he shal not be saued / Certes aynste that cursyd wanhope he shold thynke that the passyon of ihesu is more sewnge to vnbrynche than synne is to brynche / And aynste the second wanhope he shal thynke that as ofte as he fallth / he shal arysen by penitence / And though he neuer so longe haue leyn in synne / The mercy of crist is alwey redy to receyue hym to mercy aynste the Wanhope that he demeth that he shold not longe perseuere in goodnes / he shal thynke that the febilnes of the deuyll may no thyng do but men wyl suffre hym / eke he shal haue strengthe of god and of alle holy chyrche and of the protection of aungellys yf hym lyst / Thenne shull men vnderstonde what is the fruyt of penaunce / And after the word of ihesu crist / it is endelesse blisse of heuene / There ioye hath no contrariosite of woo ne greeuaunce There al harmys be past of thys present lyf / there as is sikernes fro the pynes of helle / there as is the blessed cōpany that reioysen euermore eueryche of others ioye / there as the body of man that whylom was foule and derke is more clere thenne the sonne / there as whylom the body was seck and frel / feble and mortal

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As Immortal and so strong and so hool that there may no thyng  
enpayre hit / there as neyther is hunger ne thurst ne colde / but  
euery soule replenysshed wyth the sight of the parfayght knowynge  
of the trinite / These blessed regne may man purchace by pouerte  
spirituel / and the glorie by solennesse / the plente of joye by  
hunger and thurst / And the reste by traueyll / and the lyf by  
deth and mortification of synne / To that lyf he vs brynge that  
bought wyth his precious blood Amen /

Explicit Tractatus Galfredi Chaucer de  
Penitencia Ut dicitur pro fabula Rectoris

**N**ow praye I to hem alle that herken this litel treatise or  
rede / that yf there be ony thyng that lyketh hem / that  
therof they thanke our lord Ihesu crist of whom proce-  
deth alle wyght and goodnes / And yf there be ony thyng  
that dysplese hem I praye hem also that they arrete it in the de-  
faute of myn vnkynnyng & not to myn wyll / that wolde fayne haue  
sayd better yf that I had had connyng / For our book sayth / al  
that is writen is writen for our doctryne / & that is myn entente  
wherfore I beseeke you mekely for the mercy of god / that ye for  
me praye that Crist haue mercy on me and foryeue me my gyltes  
and namely of my traslacions and endytynges of worldly  
vanytees / the whyche I reuoke in my retractions / as is the book  
of troylus / the book also of fame / the book of pylygrymage / the  
book of the duchesse / the book of saynt Valentyns day of the  
parlament of byrdes / The tales of caunterbury tho that solynge  
vnto synne / the book of the Lyon / and many other bookys yf  
they were in my remembraunce and many a songe and many a  
lecherous lape that Crist of his grete mercy foryeue me the  
synne / But of the traslacion of Boece de consolacione and  
other bookys as of legendys of sayntes and omelies / moralite /  
and deuocion / that thanke I of our lord Ihesu Crist and his  
blessed moder and alle the sayntes of heuen / beseechynge hem  
that they from hensforth vnto my lyues ende sende me grace to be  
waght myn gyltes that it may stande vnto the sauacion of my

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forke & graunte me grace of very repentance / confessions & satisfactions to doo in this present lyf / through the benygne grace of hym that is kyng of kynges and prest of alle prestes that bought us with the precious blood of his herte / so that I may be one of hem at the day of dome that shal be sayd / Qui cum patre et spiritu sancto uiuit et regnat deus / Per omnia secula seculorum AMEN /